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ABSTRACT

A study compared the effects of words in isolation (WI) and words in context (WC) instruction on the word learning and retention of word meanings of 11 average readers from a multi-age classroom (grades 4 and 5). To investigate whether WC instruction improved a child's ability to use context cues to determine the meaning of an unknown word encountered in context, the 11 children were divided into two reading groups, each receiving a different form of vocabulary instruction. A pre-post-post vocabulary test design was used to compare the vocabulary knowledge gains of each group and retention of word meanings over time. The WC group did experience greater gains in vocabulary knowledge and retained more vocabulary meanings over time than the WI group. In addition to the vocabulary tests, both groups were also given a pre- and post-deriving-the-meaning-of-unknown-words-from-context words from context test. This test was used to ascertain each participant's ability to independently use context to derive the meaning of unknown words from context prior to instruction and following instruction. These results were less conclusive regarding the effects of context cue instruction on the individual ability of a child to independently use context to determine the meaning of an unknown word encountered in context. Using context independently appears to be a complex task that may require extensive exposure to context, a strong vocabulary base and extensive training in how to use context to derive the meaning of unknown words. Contains 29 references, 6 tables, and 10 graphs of data. Appendixes contain numerous evaluation instruments and word lists. (Author/RS)

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Verbal Comprehension: Learning to Derive Word Meaning from Context versus Individual Direct Word Instruction

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Spring Quarter, 2000

CS 014 006

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Abstract

This study compared the effects of words in isolation (WI) and words in context (WC) instruction on the word learning and retention of word meanings of 11 average readers from a multi-age classroom (grades 4 and 5). To investigate whether WC instruction improved a child's ability to use context cues to determine the meaning of an unknown word encountered in context the 11children were divided into two reading groups each receiving a different form of vocabulary instruction. A pre-post-post vocabulary test design was used to compare the vocabulary knowledge gains of each group and retention of word meanings over time. The WC group did experience greater gains in vocabulary knowledge and retained more vocabulary meanings over time than the WI group. In addition to the vocabulary tests, both groups were also given a pre and post deriving the meaning of unknown words from context test. This test was used to ascertain each participant's ability to independently use context to derive the meaning of unknown words from context prior to instruction and following instruction. These results were less conclusive regarding the effects of context cue instruction on the individual ability of a child to independently use context to determine the meaning of an unknown word encountered in context. Using context independently appears to be a complex task that may require extensive exposure to context, a strong vocabulary base and extensive training in how to use context to derive the meaning of unknown words.

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I first became interested in vocabulary instruction and development when I was administering a reading test to a third grade classroom in which I was a substitute teacher. I was not allowed to provide any assistance to the students with understanding or answering questions, but the students still raised their hands to ask questions. I began to notice that every time students raised their hands with a question, the question would always pertain to a vocabulary word that they did not understand.

Later as I was mulling over this experience, I began to wonder about the difference between students who could comprehend the vocabulary on the test and those who could not. Were the students who did not ask questions simply better readers with larger vocabulary knowledge? If so, how did these students develop their vocabulary knowledge? Did the learning of new vocabulary words occur naturally through their own reading or had they received vocabulary instruction and strategies for deriving the meaning of unfamiliar words from context? My intrigue with children's vocabulary knowledge and development eventually lead to a quest for finding answers to the questions that were swirling about in my own mind. The quest began with a look at current literature in the field of vocabulary development.

Statement of the Problem

Vocabulary knowledge as it relates to a child's success in school should not be overlooked. Charlene Spretnak (1997), in The Resurgence of the Real, declares there is a large number of young individuals that do not like to read and one of the reasons behind this lack of interest in reading is their shrunken

vocabularies. Based on a 1996 article from the San Francisco Chronicle about adults, who can't read, Spretnak (1997) describes how the vocabularies of a child between the ages of 6 and 14 have decreased from 25,000 words to 10,000 words in the past fifty years.

Jenkins, Matlock and Slocum (1989) also believe that a child's success in school is directly related to her/his knowledge of words. Delving into the field of vocabulary improvement reveals a belief common among researchers that vocabulary knowledge is related to verbal and reading comprehension (Carnine, Kameenui & Coyle, 1984; Jenkins, Matlock & Slocum, 1989; McKeown, 1985; Rupley, Logan & Nichols, 1999; Sternburg & Powell, 1983). Carnine, Kameenui and Coyle (1984) acknowledge that unfamiliar words can often render a sentence or an entire passage meaningless to the reader. If lack of word knowledge leads to misinterpreting or not understanding text, then it would stand to reason that learning the meanings of unfamiliar words would aid in the comprehension of text. The link between vocabulary knowledge and reading comprehension has lead many researchers to investigate the effectiveness of various vocabulary instructional methods. Two methods of particular interest are direct instruction in individual word meanings and using context to derive the meanings of unknown words, also known as context cue instruction.

Vocabulary research reveals that there are both positive and negative aspects of direct instruction in individual word meanings and context cue instruction. According to Jenkins, Matlock and Slocum (1989) direct instruction in individual word meanings has the potential to be an effective means of

vocabulary instruction when it is delivered in a quick and efficient manner. Children are more likely to learn and retain word meanings when their attention has been focused on learning specific word meanings. On the other hand, Nagy, Herman, and Anderson (1985) found that direct instruction in vocabulary lead to a minimal less acquisition of more words over time. Direct instruction in word meanings is limited by the instructional time it takes to provide specific word meaning instruction. The drawback to individual word meaning instruction, teaching lists of words out of context, is that it accounts for only a small percentage of the words that children are estimated to learn in a year. Nagy and Herman (1984) estimate that children learn as many as 3,000 words a year. Jenkins, Matlock and Slocum (1989) discovered through a review of a study performed in 1985 by McKeown, Beck, Omanson and Pople (1985) that if teachers spent 30 minutes a day on vocabulary instruction students would learn approximately 270 words a year. This amount of words covers only 9% of the words that children learn in a year.

A second disadvantage of individual word instruction in word meanings is the reliance on the usage of dictionary definitions. Dictionary definitions can hinder a child's ability to learn word meanings. Children tend to form inaccurate understandings of word meanings because the structure of dictionary definitions tends to focus one's attention on only a fragment of the definition (McKeown, 1993; Nist & Olejnik, 1995).

In response to the inadequacies of individual word meaning instruction, researchers have turned their attention to the investigation of context and how it

can be used to learn new vocabulary words. According to Nagy, Herman and Anderson (1985), incidental word learning from context may be the cause of a majority of the words children learn since direct instruction in vocabulary is responsible for a small amount of the words children know. Incidental word learning is the process of learning the meaning of a word through one's reading. Research remains inconclusive on the actual effects of using context cues to infer word meanings (Carnine, Kameenui & Coyle, 1984; Jenkins, Matlock & Slocum, 1989; Kuhn & Stahl, 1998; McKeown, 1985; Nagy, Herman & Anderson, 1985; Sternburg & Powell, 1983).

According to vocabulary instruction research, some students do have a natural ability to derive meaning from context (Herman & Dole, 1988; Khun & Stahl, 1998; Nagy, Herman & Anderson, 1985). Acquiring word meaning from natural context, however, does not always happen automatically. First of all, natural context does not always provide adequate cues for deriving a word's meaning. Secondly, some children have not acquired the skills necessary for deriving the meaning of words from context. McKeown (1985) found that lower ability students have a difficult time using context to derive the meaning of unfamiliar words. Howell, Fox and Morehead (1993) suggest that low ability readers often have the skills to derive meaning from context but are unable to use these skills in a natural reading environment because of their limited reading and social skills. Buikema and Graves (1993) and McKeown (1985) have witnessed that providing training in deriving word meaning from context is generally effective. In the aforementioned studies, however, the participants

worked with texts that were contrived by the researchers or carefully selected for good contextual clues.

Little research exists on a child's ability to transfer skills for deriving meaning from context to natural reading situations. Additionally it still remains unclear whether individual word instruction or context cue instruction is a more effective method of vocabulary instruction over time. While pondering these thoughts, I decided to investigate how the use of individual word instruction and context cue instruction, in the context of a reading group, would affect the ability of children to learn and retain vocabulary word knowledge.

Purpose of the Study

The intent of this action research was to investigate how the learning of unknown words from natural context is affected by the method of vocabulary instruction used. I was interested in discovering the effects of teaching unknown vocabulary words by means of direct instruction in word meaning versus the effects of providing children with training in how to derive the meaning of unknown words from context. I observed and described the effects of each vocabulary instructional method on students' vocabulary growth and independent usage of context cues to derive the meaning of unknown words.

Research Hypotheses and Questions

I predicted that providing direct instruction in deriving the meaning of unknown words from context would be more beneficial than direct instruction in word meanings. It is assumed by researchers that children have a natural ability to use context to derive the meanings of unknown words but the degree to which

readers use this ability varies (Herman & Dole, 1988; Howell, Fox & Morehead, 1993; Khun & Stahl, 1998; Nagy, Herman & Anderson, 1985). This study investigated whether this natural ability to use context could be strengthened through context cue training. I believed that context cue instruction would enable students to identify meaningful cues in context, disregard irrelevant clues and develop a correct meaning for unknown words encountered in context from the cues they identified. The individual word instruction group would not experience the same growth in their ability to use context to derive the meanings of unknown words because my instructional focus was for them to learn individual word meanings. In an attempt to gather data supporting the main hypotheses of this study the following questions were addressed:

- Will context cue instruction lead to greater increases in vocabulary knowledge than direct instruction in word meanings?
- Which instructional method leads to better retention of word meanings?
- Are students who receive context cue instruction more apt to use a context cue strategy for deriving the meaning of unknown words than students who do not receive context cue instruction?
- How does direct instruction in deriving the meaning of unknown words from context affect the ability of children to use naturally occurring text to learn the meaning of unfamiliar words?
- Which form of instruction encourages and promotes the development an understanding of fuller word meanings?

- How can educators most effectively and efficiently increase a child's word knowledge?

Theoretical Perspective

The ability to comprehend what one is reading is paramount. Students can not comprehend what they are reading if the numbers of words they understand are fewer than the words they do not understand. Some researchers propose that vocabulary knowledge leads to improved reading comprehension (Beck, Perfetti & McKeown, 1982; Herman & Dole, 1988; Sternburg & Powell, 1983) while others suggest that some amount of text comprehension is required in order for vocabulary acquisition to occur (Herman, Anderson, Pearson & Nagy, 1987). In a study conducted by Beck, Perfetti & McKeown (1982), the researchers observed that students who receive vocabulary instruction performed significantly higher on vocabulary and reading comprehension tasks than students who did not receive vocabulary instruction. Vocabulary knowledge and reading comprehension must have a bi-directional relationship because the reader must know the meanings of words in order to comprehend what is being read but they must also possess a certain level of vocabulary knowledge to produce meaning from the text (Sternburg & Powell, 1983). According to the Center for the Study of Reading's summary of Marilyn J. Adam's Beginning to Read (1990), the relationship between reading comprehension and vocabulary knowledge is symbiotic:

> Children depend on the meaning of the passage to infer the meaning of its less familiar words, yet the meaning of the passage

> depends disproportionately upon the meanings of its less frequent words (p. 89).

Rupley, Logan and Nichols (1991) believe that vocabulary instruction in combination with reading instruction enhances abilities to comprehend and infer meanings.

Many researchers suggest that a relationship between comprehension and vocabulary knowledge exists but the extent of this relationship is unclear. According to Beck, Perfetti and McKeown (1982), some researchers say that comprehension is improved by vocabulary instruction while other researchers have reported that vocabulary instruction has no affect on student comprehension. A long standing trend is the investigation of the effectiveness of vocabulary instruction in regards to improving reading comprehension and using context to acquire word meanings (McKeown, 1985).

Definition of Terms

The following terms used in this study are defined for clarification and based on information from Jenkins, Matlock & Slocum (1989) and Nagy, Herman & Anderson (1985):

Context cue – words in a sentence that can be used to determine the meaning of an unknown word in the sentence.

Context cue instruction or deriving meaning from context instruction– teaching students to use words in a sentence or surrounding sentences to help determine the meaning of an unknown word in context.

Incidental acquisition – when a reader learns vocabulary words by reading independently or through social contexts.

Individual word meaning instruction or words in isolation instruction – direct instruction in word meanings through a list of words not in context, the teacher presents the meaning of a word.

Unknown word – a word which one does not understand.

Significance of the Study

This study is significant because it compares the effects of two different vocabulary instruction methods on two heterogeneous groups of fourth and fifth grade students. Many researchers have pondered the extent of the benefits of vocabulary instruction. A summary of Adam's (1990) work makes it apparent that there is a need for vocabulary instruction and special attention should be given to the types of instructional methods used:

> Explicit training in the strategic use of context seems to be warranted, as does the teaching of word parts, such as prefixes, suffixes and roots. The use of both types of cues is not automatic, but they are part of a sensitivity to words that seems important in the incidental learning of word meaning from context (p. 89).

Many researchers believe that language rich experiences such as context cue instruction will have a greater impact on vocabulary learning than direct instruction in individual word meanings. In fact, the Center for the Study of Reading summarizing Adams' (1990) wrote, "Studies have found that young children can learn new word meanings from as little as one exposure in a book

read aloud" (p. 46). Vocabulary learning, however, takes place over time. A child's understanding of a word's meaning grows as the amount of exposures to a word increase (Jenkins, Matlock & Slocum, 1989; Nagy, Herman, & Anderson, 1985). According to Nagy et al. (1985), partial knowledge of a word's meaning is obtained from one exposure to a word and the meaning. McKeown (1985) recognizes that one exposure to a word does not lead to full knowledge of the word's meaning. Furthermore, substantial knowledge of the meaning can be gained when exposed to the word in context. McKeown (1985) believes that accurate information pertaining to the meaning of a word can be extracted from context and working within contextual limits enables the reader to use context more readily. Learning from context can extend a child's understanding of previously unknown vocabulary words. In fact, multiple exposures to a word in context can positively affect the learning of word meanings from context (McKeown, 1993).

The structure of dictionary definitions, on the other hand, does not enable children to learn the correct usage or meaning of a word. A definition for one word in a dictionary can contain several examples of the word's meaning. The purpose of these examples is to represent all aspects of the word's meaning. Children, however, do not always have the skill to synthesize all the examples into the correct meaning. Due to this lack of skill, children will often focus on a fragment of the definition (Nist & Olejnisk, 1995). By focusing on a fragment of the definition, children miss the fuller meaning of the word and are not able to accurately use the word in their own writing or communications. Word definitions

are not likely to produce a complete understanding of a word. Context, on the other hand, has the potential to provide explicit clues regarding the meaning of a word and how it can be used in context. McKeown (1993) states that complete understanding of a word meaning comes from repeated exposures to words used in rich contexts.

Context cue instruction is beneficial because it engages the learner and is connected to natural text unlike direct instruction in word meanings. According to Blachowicz and Lee (1991) "any instructional task surrounding authentic reading must engage learners in active, meaningful ways." (p. 189). Researchers have begun to question whether training children to derive meaning from context is a skill that will transfer to independent reading. If deriving meaning from context is a transferable skill, there is potential for an increase in their incidental learning rate (Herman, Anderson, Pearson & Nagy, 1987; Jenkins, Matlock & Slocum, 1989; Nagy, Herman & Anderson, 1985). Research regarding the transfer of the deriving meaning from context skill is minimal and further exploration of this topic remains to be seen. This study attempts to provide supporting evidence for current assumptions in the field of vocabulary research, as well as useful information regarding vocabulary instruction and its effects on vocabulary knowledge gain and retention.

Review of the Literature

Decreasing vocabulary knowledge and increasing dislike for reading among young students has alarmed educators and researchers. Educational researchers have been concerned with increasing the vocabulary knowledge of students through instruction. This review of literature focuses on findings regarding the affects of different methods of vocabulary instruction and how incidental word learning affects vocabulary growth.

Past research has investigated the effects of definitional and contextual instruction on learning new words, understanding their meanings and improving reading comprehension (Beck, Perfetti & McKeown, 1982; Buikema & Graves 1993; Carnine, Kameenui & Coyle, 1984; Herman & Dole, 1988; Jenkins, Matlock & Slocum, 1989; Kolich, 1985; Khun & Stahl, 1998; McKeown, 1985; McKeown, 1993; Nagy, Herman & Anderson, 1985; Rupley, Logan & Nichols, 1999; Sternburg & Powell, 1983). The role of incidental word learning versus direct instruction of unknown words has also been researched. Researchers estimate that the vocabulary growth of children between kindergarten and twelfth grade per year ranges between 3,000 and 5,000 words a year (D'Anna, Zechmeister & Hall, 1991; Kuhn & Stahl, 1998). Although there has been some disagreement regarding the actual rate of vocabulary growth, it is obvious that children learn words rapidly. The rate of growth per year is so high that it appears that more words are acquired incidentally through context than through direct instruction (D'Anna, Zechmeister & Hall, 1991;Kuhn & Stahl, 1998; McKeown, 1985). Researchers have investigated the effects of teaching children

to derive meaning from context and how it affects their ability to develop an understanding of words and the ability to independently learn the meanings of unfamiliar words.

Methods of Instruction

The definitional approach. Definitional instruction is a practical method of teaching specific word meanings. According to Herman and Dole (1988), the definitional approach is the least time consuming method of instruction. A large amount of words can be covered in a short period of time. Traditionally the definitional approach relies on direct instruction of individual words. Students are taught individual word definitions by the teacher or are required to look up words in a glossary or dictionary. Semantics are also focused on during definitional instruction. Synonyms and antonyms are associated with word definitions and roots and affixes may be taught.

According to a study by Jenkins, Matlock and Slocum (1989), students who received individual word instruction accompanied by multiple exposures to the newly learned words performed well on tests of vocabulary knowledge. They outperformed their counterparts who had received instruction in how to derive word meaning from context. When both groups were presented with the task of deriving word meaning from context, however, there was no significant difference between their scores. The scores of both groups were equally low, although the group that received instruction in how to derive meaning from context did score slightly higher than the direct instruction group. Even a small increase in the ability to derive words from context has the potential to increase the amount of

words children can learn over a school year. The researchers concluded that although more words were learned during direct instruction, direct instruction is less likely to encourage independent learning of vocabulary.

Kolich (1985) and Herman and Dole (1988) implied that the definitional approach does not guarantee comprehension because learning definitions often results in partial word knowledge and does not provide students with a conceptual understanding of words. Definitions are problematic because the form of a definition can lead children to misinterpretations of a word's meaning. McKeown (1995) identifies four attributes of definitions that tend to be problematic and might lead to misinterpretations of a word's meaning. The first of these attributes is weak differentiation. Weak differentiation occurs when the definition overshoots the target definition. In other words, a concept that is not directly related to the target concept is used to define a word. The second problem is likely interpretations, which occurs when one or more of the defining terms are interpreted in a familiar sense rather than the sense that was intended. Vague language also leads to problems in understanding the meaning of a definition. Finally, definitions can offer too much information that seems unrelated. When faced with wordy and complex definitions children find it difficult to combine all the separate meanings into one integrated definition.

According to Herman and Dole (1988), the lack of background knowledge is another variable that affects the effectiveness of the definitional approach to vocabulary instruction. Underlying concepts related to a word are often excluded from definition instruction. If a child is lacking in background

information then the newly learned word will have little meaning to him or her. Learning definitions does not promote connections between new knowledge and prior knowledge (Herman & Dole, 1988).

The definitional approach to vocabulary instruction is very directed. Watts (1995) observed vocabulary instruction during reading in six separate fifth and sixth grade classrooms and found that 60% of the time the teacher would provide word definitions. Teachers always began their discussions of word definitions by asking, "Who knows what [target word] means?" Then a student or the teacher would give the definition. This form of discourse and passive learning, unfortunately, inhibits students from actively engaging in the learning process. One of the best practices in literacy instruction is to actively engage the learner in meaningful language tasks (Blachowicz & Lee, 1991, Rupley, Logan & Nichols, 1999). Students need to be encouraged to connect new knowledge with old word knowledge in a meaningful way. Memorizing and looking up definitions has little meaning for the students. Without making connections to existing knowledge, retention and integration of the new knowledge is less likely to occur.

The contextual approach. Although not as popular as the definitional approach, the contextual approach is certainly an approach that is growing in popularity. The contextual approach manages to provide opportunities for developing word meanings and understandings by connecting old knowledge with new knowledge. Unlike the definitional approach, the contextual approach does not limit the learner to one specific word meaning. McKeown (1985) states:

> Providing models of interpreting contexts containing new words that are being learned could help children to understand that word meanings have both stable and flexible elements and to develop ways to apply words in new contexts and test their appropriateness (p. 495).

Contextual instruction encourages comprehension as the reader examines the multiple meanings of a word provided in context (Blachowicz & Lee, 1991; Buikema & Graves, 1993; Herman & Dole, 1988; Rupley, Logan & Nichols, 1999).

The contextual approach is the second most wildly used method of teaching word meaning (Watts, 1995). The purpose of this approach is to teach the meaning of unknown words through context. Students are taught to problem solve and reason effectively about the meaning of words. Contextual learning requires active participation of the students. The teacher must first provide explicit training in how to derive meaning from context. After actively modeling the problem solving procedure, the teacher must provide multiple opportunities to practice deriving meaning from context under the teacher's guidance. Eventually, students are required to take the responsibility of deriving meaning from context. According to the quasi-experimental study of Buikema and Graves (1993), carefully planned instruction in deriving meaning from context increased student vocabulary knowledge.

The contextual approach to teaching vocabulary appears to be a beneficial method of instruction. Jenkins, Matlock and Slocum (1989) made a

between group comparison involving students who had received individual word instruction and those who had received contextual instruction. The researchers observed that the context group performed slightly better on deriving meaning from context tasks. According to the authors, the training in deriving meaning from context was responsible for an 83 to 93% within group improvement in the ability to derive meaning from context. It was also observed that student performance was related to the amount of practice they received. Students who received medium and high amounts of practice did significantly better than the low-level practice group. After conducting a week-long instructional unit on deriving meaning from context, Buikema and Graves (1993) also suggested that maintenance of the skill would require additional practice. Teacher modeling is also an essential component of context cue instruction. Modeling how to derive word meaning from context has a positive affect on the ability of children to use context skills (Buikema & Graves, 1993; McKeown, 1985).

Even though context vocabulary instruction appears to be favored among many researchers, there are still limitations to this method of teaching vocabulary. First of all, natural context does not always provide adequate cues for determining word meaning (Carnine, Kameenui & Coyle, 1984; Herman & Dole, 1988; McKeown, 1985; Nagy, Herman & Anderson, 1985; Rupley, Logan & Nichols, 1999; Sternburg & Powell, 1983). According to Sternburg and Powell (1983), there are mediating variables that affect, both positively and negatively, the usefulness of context cues. These variables include but are not limited to: (a) the occurrence and density of the unknown words in text, (b) the importance of

the unknown word in understanding the context, (c) the helpfulness of surrounding context and (d) the usefulness of prior knowledge in the usage of context cues.

Secondly, context often provides information about only one of a word's many meanings. Therefore, context can not always be relied upon to understand the meaning of an unknown word. Context can often be misleading and can lead to an incorrect understanding of an unknown word (Herman & Dole, 1988; Jenkins, Matlock & Slocum, 1989; McKeown, 1985).

A third factor that affects the ability of a child to learn a word from context is the ability of the child to disregard irrelevant information and combine all the relevant information into a meaningful definition of the unknown word (McKeown, 1985; Sternburg & Powell, 1983). Sternburg & Powell hypothesize that prior word knowledge and the ability to reason are additional variables that can play a role in the success of deriving meaning from context instruction. According to McKeown (1985), teacher modeling of how to use context to derive word meanings may reduce the negative affects of these mediating variables.

> Exposure to successful models and interactive practice in deriving information from context could give children the opportunity to develop a sense of how to use context to take advantage of the information it offers without bringing to bear information that is irrelevant or causes interference (p. 495).

Nagy, Herman, and Anderson (1985) suggest that despite the drawbacks of learning vocabulary through context, a single exposure to a word in context can

account for a substantial gain in word knowledge even when children are exposed to only a partial meaning of the word. Imagine what continuous exposure to context and modeling of the context strategy could do for children as they develop the ability to derive the meaning of unknown words from context.

Incidental Acquisition of Word Meaning

An argument used in defense of the contextual method of vocabulary instruction is the theory of incidental acquisition of vocabulary through continuous exposure to reading. Herman and Dole (1988) state that student word learning occurs incidentally through reading. In fact, students can learn more words through reading than through vocabulary instruction. In a review of current literature regarding vocabulary development, Crais (1990) concluded that word learning can occur with as little as one exposure to a word, a more complete understanding of a word is developed through continuous exposures to the word.

The results of an experimental study by Nagy, Herman and Anderson (1985) suggested that incidental acquisition is related to vocabulary growth. Two groups of 8th grade students were each given a different reading passage. One group read a narrative passage and the other group read an informational passage. After reading the passages and receiving no vocabulary instruction, each group was tested on vocabulary from both passages although each group had read only one of the passages. The subjects knew a greater number of target words from the passage they read than the passage they did not read. In other words, learning from context does take place naturally.

Herman, Anderson, Pearson and Nagy (1987) also conducted a study of 8th grade students' ability to learn words incidentally. The researchers investigated the effect of text features on incidental word learning. First of all, the results of the study revealed that text features do affect vocabulary learning. Both low and high ability students experienced more vocabulary learning after reading an elaborated version of the text. The research results regarding incidental word learning agreed with those of the previous study. Incidental word learning does occur through reading. Herman et al. (1987) delved further into the topic of incidental learning than the previous study by investigating how ability level affects the ability to learn from context. Herman et al. (1987) found that incidental word learning does occur but is affected by the type of text the student is reading as well as the ability level of the reader. According to the Herman et al. (1987):

> The least able readers had a probability of .05 to .10 of learning an unknown word from context. The most able readers on the other hand had a .26 to.46 probability of learning an unknown word from context (p. 227).

Although the low ability readers had less potential to learn words incidentally than the high ability readers, the researchers were not against teaching children vocabulary through context. In fact, the results of this study actually indicated that both low and high ability readers benefited from reading elaborated versions of the text, which were written explicitly. The researchers suggested the reason

behind the high ability readers' finer performance is that high ability students are better at deriving word meaning from context.

High and Low Ability Students' Use of Context

High ability students have an advantage over low ability students when it comes to obtaining meaning from context. According to McKeown (1985) and Herman, Anderson, Pearson & Nagy (1987) high ability students were better able to use contextual strategies for gaining new meanings than low ability students. They concluded that low ability students receive little benefit from indirect experience with text. According to Howell, Fox and Morehead (1993), low ability students possess the skills to derive word meaning from context but they do not use the skills because their poor reading skills limit them. They lack the strategies for deriving meaning from context. The authors suggest direct instruction in word meanings is by far the quickest way to gain knowledge of words for these students. Contextual reading, on the other hand, has the potential to increase word knowledge significantly over an extended period of time (Nagy, Herman & Anderson, 1985).

Mixed Approach

Research suggests that direct vocabulary instruction is beneficial to all students(Buikema & Graves, 1993; Jenkins, Matlock & Slocum, 1989; McKeown, 1985; Nagy, Herman & Anderson, 1985). Although continuous exposure to reading can account for a percentage of vocabulary growth, contextual reading does not always result in automatic word learning. Poorer readers are often times less able to use context to gain word meanings (Blachowicz & Lee, 1991).

By comparing the methods of vocabulary instruction, definitional and contextual, both disadvantages and advantages of each approach are revealed. Of the these two approaches, none should be relied upon as the only method for teaching vocabulary. Each approach has potential to increase student vocabulary (Jenkins, Matlock & Slocum, 1989). In fact, research suggests more vocabulary growth occurs when teachers rely on a mixed approach to teaching vocabulary (Crais, 1990; Herman & Dole, 1988).

There are aspects of each instructional approach that can be used to provide students with rich word experiences as they develop their vocabulary knowledge. An important aspect of vocabulary instruction is the meaningfulness to the learner (Blachowicz & Lee, 1991). The importance of learning vocabulary should be emphasized, but simply learning definitions is a task without meaning. Vocabulary learning, however, becomes more meaningful when it is presented in conjunction with stories that are being read in class (Blachowicz & Lee, 1991; Rupley, Logan & Nichols, 1999). Vocabulary instruction can be included in both pre-reading activities and post reading discussions. Multiple exposures to new vocabulary words increase the potential for retention of meaning (Jenkins, Matlock & Slocum, 1989).

Conclusion

Researchers agree that vocabulary instruction is vital to a student's vocabulary growth, which is related to improved reading comprehension. Even though it is agreed that vocabulary instruction is important, there are aspects of vocabulary instruction that remain unclear. First of all, research seems to be torn

about the effects of contextual vocabulary instruction. Although Jenkins, Matlock and Slocum (1989) noted that students who received contextual instruction appeared to perform better on deriving meaning from context tasks, their improvement was only minimal. In addition, their performance on vocabulary knowledge tests was significantly lower than the performance of students who had received direct definitional instruction. Nagy, Herman & Anderson (1985), on the other hand, concluded from their study of learning words from context, that learning from context could lead to the acquisition of several thousands words per year. A possible reason for the difference between the results may be due to the time spent in reading. In the Jenkins et al. (1989) study, the students were taught a strategy for deriving meaning from context. The context was carefully constructed by the researchers and contained specific target words. Then the students were tested on their knowledge of the words. Contextual instruction was made more meaningful in the Nagy et al. (1985) study by including reading passages. The target words that the students were tested on came from assigned reading passages. In reading the passages, the subjects were given the opportunity to derive meaning from a natural context and make connections between their prior knowledge and the new knowledge gained from the context. Incidental word acquisition may have also affected the performance of the subjects in a second study. The study of Nagy et al. (1985) presents an argument for presenting vocabulary instruction in combination with reading. The benefits of time spent in reading exceed the benefits of vocabulary growth. Other benefits include enjoyment of reading and gains in general knowledge.

The connection between deriving meaning from context and incidental word acquisition is a second aspect of vocabulary instruction that should be more fully researched. McKeown (1985) observed that high ability students are naturally better at using context to derive meaning from context. Low ability groups demonstrated a misunderstanding of the relationship between a word and context in which it was found. They had difficulty selecting appropriate context constraints that would lead to identification of words. The results of McKeown's (1985) study suggest that learning from context does not always come automatically, especially for lower ability students. Using context to derive meaning is a complex process that requires the ability to identify and disregard irrelevant information and integrate prior knowledge with new knowledge in determining meaning. Herman, Anderson, Pearson and Nagy (1987) found that students can learn from context but the likelihood that low ability students will learn the meaning of words from natural context on their own is low. Nagy, Herman and Anderson (1985), whose subjects were all average readers, suggest that it may be possible to increase incidental word learning through instruction and repeated exposures to context. Buikema & Graves' (1993) study supports this assumption and suggests that instruction can increase the ability of children to learn the meaning of unknown words from context. During a week-long instructional unit on using context to derive word meaning, increases in student use of context to infer word meanings were observed. Mastery of the skill, however, was not obtained. Buikema and Graves (1993) suggest that children need to experience many opportunities of using deriving word meaning from

context skills in authentic reading situations before transfer of the skill will take place.

Using context to derive word meaning can be taught directly through teacher modeling. McKeown (1985) suggests that teacher modeling of context strategies could improve context skills. The question remains, "How much of an effect does context cue instruction have on the vocabulary growth of children?" Vocabulary growth rates appear to suggest that children appear to naturally use context to learn the meaning of words incidentally. If students were given strategies for deriving meanings, would those strategies be used during independent reading and would incidental vocabulary increase? Little research exists on the transfer of deriving meaning from context skills and the long term effects of context cue instruction.

It is known that vocabulary instruction, whether direct instruction in word meanings or context cue instruction does increase vocabulary knowledge. As little as one exposure to the meaning of a word can help children develop a partial understanding of a word. The question is which form of vocabulary instruction encourages and promotes the development and understanding of fuller word meanings and how can educators most effectively and efficiently increase a child's word knowledge?

The purpose of education is to educate children to become independent learners. Even in the area of vocabulary development, it is important for children to learn on their own. There is not enough time in a day or a school year for a teacher to teach the meanings to all the words children may encounter in their

lifetime. Children need to be able to learn the full meaning of words on their own. Direct instruction in word meanings is efficient in delivering knowledge to students but it is limited in its effectiveness. Consider the old adage, "If you give a man a fish, he will eat for a day. Teach a man to fish and he will eat for lifetime." Direct instruction in word meanings is like giving children a fish. They learn only the words that are needed to understand the immediate assignments they are doing in class. Context cue instruction, on the other hand, has the potential to make children into fishermen of words. The reader can then determine the meaning of unknown words on his or her own. The words that they catch have more meaning to them because of the context in which the words are found. The children are also more likely to remember the words they caught over time because they worked hard to catch them.

Methods

Research Design

This action research study investigates the relationship between the method of vocabulary instruction received and the amount of vocabulary knowledge gained and retained over time. I investigated whether training in how to use context to derive the meaning of unknown words had a positive affect on a child's ability to identify relevant clues, disregard irrelevant clues and synthesize the information s/he gained from the clues into an appropriate meaning. The classroom teacher randomly divided the subjects into two mixed ability-reading groups. By the flip of a coin, the two groups were randomly assigned to receive one of the two instructional treatments, context cue instruction or direct word meaning instruction also known as words in isolation instruction. Prior to instruction, each reading group took a vocabulary pretest and deriving word meaning from context pretest. The pretests were used as baseline information and were later compared with posttest results following vocabulary instruction.

Participants

Twelve children from a multi-grade elementary classroom (grades 4 and 5 combined) originally participated in the study. The students came from a small suburban school in the Pacific Northwest, consisting of a majority of middle class Caucasian students. Over the course of the study, one of the participants moved, reducing the original number of participants from twelve to eleven. The original twelve students were evenly divided into two groups, the words in isolation group (Group WI) and the words in context group (Group WC). The

composition of each group consisted of 4 girls and 2 boys. When a participant from group WI moved, group WI was reduced to 3 girls and 2 boys. Group WI contained 4 fourth grade students and 1 fifth grade student, while group WC contained 3 fourth grade students and 3 fifth grade students. Students chosen to participate in the study met the following criteria: (a) students possessed limited vocabulary knowledge and (b) students read at grade level. A vocabulary pretest (see appendix A) and the classroom teacher's knowledge of her students' reading ability were used to ensure that the students selected to participate meet the above criteria. Parental consent was obtained in the form of a letter prior to the pre-testing (see appendix B).

Instrumentation and Materials

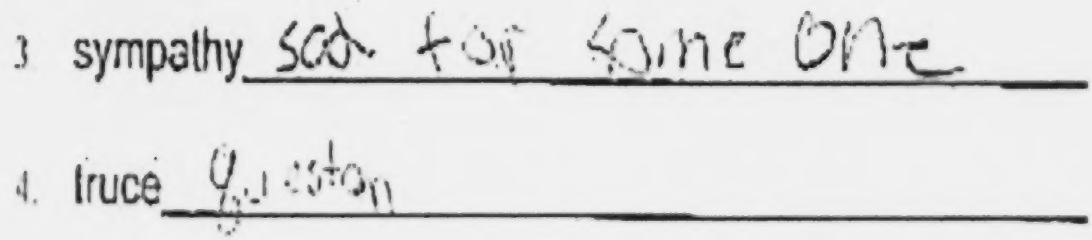
The materials used prior to vocabulary instruction consisted of two tests developed by the researcher: words in isolation and words in context. The scores from the words in isolation and words in context tests indicated the students' level of word knowledge and each individual's ability to derive word meaning from context.

Words in isolation pretest. The twelve participants were given the same vocabulary pretest. The vocabulary words selected for the test came from Kavik the Wolf Dog by Walt Morey. (see appendix A). Kavik the Wolf Dog was the fifth grade reading text used during reading and vocabulary instruction. The classroom teacher and I chose this book because the students had not read this book prior to the study. The test consisted of 80 words that I believed would be unknown to the students. The vocabulary test included nouns (48%), verbs

(26%), adjectives (20%) and adverbs (6%). The students were required to write a definition for each of the words. The scores from this test were used to indicate each student's level of word knowledge prior to instruction and to choose words to be included in vocabulary instruction.

Due to the nature of the vocabulary pretest, incidental word learning, as a result of the testing procedures, was not likely to occur before vocabulary instruction began. Incidental word learning is the process of learning a meaning of word simply by reading the word and seeing it used in context or hearing the word used in context (Herman & Dole, 1988). Definitions or the context in which a word could be used were not found on the words in isolation pre-test. Each word was presented in isolation and the students were expected to write a one to two word definition in their own words for each term. Following is an example, taken from a participant's pre-test, of how the test questions were structured and answered:

Example 1: Student A2 - Word's in isolation pretest



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Words that the 12 participants defined incorrectly or simply did not define were considered unknown words. The actual definitions of the unknown words were taught when vocabulary instruction began.

Words in context pretest. Before instruction began and after being placed in one of the two vocabulary instructional groups, each of the participants was given another pretest (see appendix C). The purpose of the second pretest was to evaluate students' ability to use context to derive the meaning of unknown words from context prior to vocabulary instruction. Each participant met individually with me for ten minutes and was given a word in context test. The test consisted of ten passages of three to four sentences in length. Each sentence contained a word from the vocabulary pretest that the participants could not define. The passages were taken from Kavik the Wolf Dog and were chosen according to the form of the passage. The purpose for the specific form was to control how the contextual information was presented. According to Carnine, Kameenui and Coyle (184) contextual information occurs in three forms: synonym, contrast and inference. All ten passages chosen for the pre-test were defined as inference passages. The meaning of each unknown word could only be determined by inferring the meaning from the clues in the context.

During the test, both the participant and I had a copy of the ten passages. I read each passage to maintain the reliability of the test. The results of this test were not confounded by an inability to read or misreading words in the passages. The children were expected to follow along by silently reading their own copy of the passages. Before the test began, I informed each child that s/he would be

reading 10 passages and each passage would contain a word that s/he did not know. The words were underlined and in bold. The participants were also informed that there would be clues in the sentences that would help them figure out the meaning of the underlined word.

The testing began when I said, "I am going to read the passages to you and I would like you to be following along silently in your head." When I finished reading a passage, I stopped and asked the child to give the definition of the unfamiliar word. If the child could not provide the meaning of the word, I asked the student if there was any information in the passage that might help her/him discover the meaning of the unknown word. If the child still did not give a definition for the word, I focused the child's attention by telling her/him to look at specific sentences surrounding the word for help in determining the meaning of the unknown word. Children who gave a definition right away were not given any specific hints to look at the sentences for clues, other than when I first explained the test. Their answers were simply written down and accepted. After a child gave her/his definition, I asked the child to explain how s/he figured out the meaning of the word.

I wrote down each child's responses and verbalizations about determining the meaning of an unknown word from context during the testing. The children's responses were also tape-recorded, in case there was a need to reference student answers during data analysis. Only 8 of the 11 participants were tape-recorded. Each child was given the choice to say yes or no to being tape-recorded. One child said it made her uncomfortable to be tape-recorded. This

child's test was not recorded on audiotape but I did take copious notes during the test. The first two children to be tested also did not have their verbalizations tape recorded due to operator error.

Strategy instruction

For four weeks I met once a week for a period of 45 minutes a day with each instructional group. The group that received direct word meaning instruction, known as the WI group, met with the me every Tuesday, while the group that received context cue instruction met with me every Thursday. After the first four weeks it became evident that the reading of the novel was occurring at a much slower rate than I had originally predicted. In order to finish the instruction and novel on time, each group met two times a week for a period of 45 minutes a day, for an additional seven weeks. The WI group met on Mondays and Wednesdays and the WC group met on Tuesdays and Thursdays.

Both groups met in a small computer room adjoining two classrooms. The primary focus of both groups was the study of vocabulary words in the context of a reading group. Both instructional groups were assigned to read Kavik the Wolf Dog. As mentioned earlier Kavik the Wolf Dog was chosen as the reading text because the students had not had any prior exposure to the book. Therefore, prior exposure to the book was not a confounding variable affecting the acquisition of vocabulary words.

The text was read aloud by each group in popcorn reading style fashion. Popcorn reading style is when students read aloud when they want and for as long as they want. For example, a volunteer would be called upon to begin the

reading and s/he would read as many paragraphs as s/he wished. When the child stopped reading, any other child could jump in and start reading. If no child chose to read at this time, then I read a few paragraphs aloud. When not reading aloud, the group members were asked to follow along inside their heads.

During the reading, each instructional group studied the same vocabulary words, although the instructional strategies that were used with each group were different. The vocabulary words used during instruction were the same words that were used for the words in isolation pretest. The results from the words in isolation pretest revealed that there were 34 words that were completely unknown by all the participants. The term completely unknown means that none of the participants were able to correctly define these words. Although some of the students could define some of the remaining 46 words, none of the words were unanimously identified. In other words, there was no one word from the words in isolation pretest that all of the students were able to define.

I felt it was appropriate to use all of the vocabulary words from the pretest during vocabulary instruction, since there would still be some instructional benefit from the additional exposures to the words' meaning (Jenkins, Matlock & Slocum, 1989; Nagy, Herman, & Anderson, 1985). Children who did not previously know a word's meaning were given instructional assistance in learning the meaning of the word during vocabulary instruction, while students who had a partial understanding of a word improved their understanding of the words through repeated exposures. If there had been a word that every child had been

able to define, the word would have been considered to be a known word and would not have been used during instruction.

Words in context group (WC). The words in context group (WC) received instruction in how to derive the meaning of unknown words from context. In the context of their reading group, the children were taught an adapted version of Buikema and Graves (1993) strategy for deriving the meaning of unknown words from context. Under my guidance the children practiced the using of the following strategy.

Day 1

I began instruction by discussing the importance of the ability to use cues in sentences to help determine the meaning of unknown words. Following the discussion I modeled the strategy for deriving the meaning of unknown words from natural text. A passage from Kavik the Wolf Dog was displayed and read aloud to the students (see appendix D). The passage contained a word that was unknown to the children, which I identified. I then introduced the students to the context cue strategy poster (see appendix E) and discussed the following four steps for deriving the meaning of an unknown word adapted from Buikema and Graves (1993).

- Underline the unknown word
- Discuss and list cues that might suggest the meaning of the word
- Think out loud about the possible meaning of the word
- Guess the meaning of the word

To determine the meaning of the unknown word in the passage that had just been read I modeled the usage of the strategy steps.

Next, I presented a second passage from Kavik the Wolf Dog to the students. This time the children had their own copy of the passage (see appendix F) and they walked through the steps with my guidance. Together the children and I identified an unknown word. I underlined the word and the children wrote the word in a word journal, I provided. The word journal was a wireless notebook that contained lined paper. As the group discussed the cues in the sentence, the children were asked to write the cues next to the unknown word they had written on their paper. Together the class thought aloud about the possible meanings of the unknown word and then a guess was made about the word's meaning. Below is an example taken from student B5's word journal depicting how the children were required to structure their responses as they practiced using the context cue strategy.

Example 2: Student B5- Word Journal

Page	word	clues	guess
11	ferocity	growling charged attack unhappy	madness
	Sympathy	Mercy	care
15	dignity	King Champion	felt Proudness

Following the teacher-guided context cue strategy practice, the children were given two more passages from Kavik the Wolf Dog containing unknown

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words. To ensure that the children worked on identifying the meaning of the same word, the unknown word was already identified by me and underlined (see appendix G). With a partner, the children used the strategy steps to discover the meaning of the unknown words in the sentences. Instruction ended with a discussion of the meanings that the students derived and of the processes the students used to derive the meanings.

Continued practice of strategy. After receiving instruction in the deriving meaning from context strategy, the students were required to continue using the strategy during the reading of Kavik the Wolf Dog. During the guided reading of Kavik the Wolf Dog, the children were asked to stop reading when they came to an unknown word and implement the strategy they learned for deriving the meaning of unknown words from context. I asked the children to stop reading when they had read one of the words previously chosen by me for instruction. When necessary, I provided guidance in using the context cue strategy to derive the meaning of words. Primarily, it was the role of the students in the group to be active in the deriving meaning process.

Except for day one, each group session began with a review of the words that had been derived in previous group sessions. Each word was presented to the participants on a 3x5 card. Through choral response the children were required to provide a meaning for the word. Once everyone in the group could provide a definition for a word, that word was no longer included in the word review because it was then considered a known word. The definitions that the

group was expected to provide were those that we had derived together as a group.

Children had their own vocabulary journal. When I stopped the reading to focus the children's attention on a vocabulary word, the children were also asked to record the word, the clues they used to guess the word's meaning and the meaning that they derived from the context. I guided the discussion of the word meanings to ensure that everyone derived an appropriate and correct definition for the unknown words.

Words in isolation group (WI). As with the WC group, the words in isolation group (WI) focused on learning the meaning of the eighty words that had been used for the vocabulary pretest in the context of their reading group. Unlike the context cue group, the definition only group received direct instruction in individual word meanings. Instead of using context to create their own definitions for words, the definition group was given a dictionary definition adapted by me for each vocabulary word (see appendix I). The following dictionaries were used in developing user friendly word definitions: Scott Foresman Intermediate Dictionary (1993), McMillian Dictionary for Children (1997) and Longman's Dictionary of Contemporary English (1987). The first two dictionaries were selected because they are used frequently in elementary classrooms and the third dictionary was used because it is known for making word meanings understandable (McKeown, 1993). In constructing meaningful definitions that would elicit a more complete understanding of the words, I consulted all three of the previously mentioned dictionaries. My rationale for

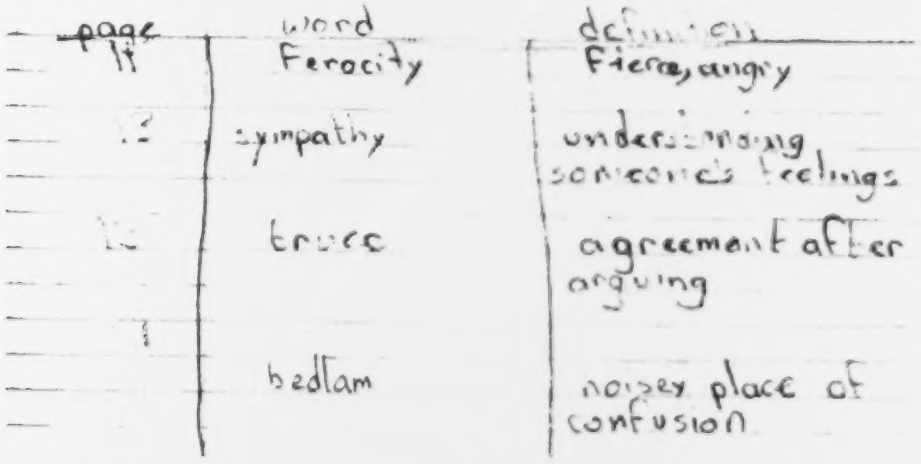
constructing definitions was based on a study conducted by McKeown (1993) regarding the creation of effective definitions.

McKeown (1993) conducted a study in which she compared the usefulness of dictionary definitions versus the usefulness of definitions that were revised to eliminate common problematic aspects of dictionary definitions. McKeown (1993) found that dictionary definitions produced the largest proportion of unacceptable responses, while a greater proportion of the responses to the revised definitions were acceptable. The results also revealed that the participants preferred the revised definitions because they felt the revised definitions were more meaningful.

The process by which I provided direct vocabulary instruction was adapted from Jenkins, Matlock and Slocum's (1989) process for teaching words in isolation. The instructional procedures used for the teaching of individual word meanings were highly structured for this group and I followed the same pattern of instruction each day. Instruction began with the presentation of unknown words (between 5 and 8 words) that would be encountered during the day's reading. Each word and the definition of the word were presented one at a time. I began by displaying and reading one word and the definition of the word. The children were then asked to repeat the word and the definition. Each of the words was presented in the same manner. Next, I covered all the definitions. The children were asked to read each word and supply the definition of the word. If the children gave an incorrect response they were corrected by me and then asked to repeat the correct definition. After this task was accomplished, I then covered

all the words, displaying only the definitions. The children were told to read the definition and then supply the correct word. If the children were unable to give the correct response they were corrected by me and asked to repeat the correct word. Then I presented an example of how each word was used in a sentence. The children were asked to once again define the word being used. Finally, the children were told to record the new words and their meanings in their vocabulary word journals. Each child was given a notebook in which to record vocabulary words that they were learning. An example of the format the children were required to use for recording vocabulary words and their meanings can be seen below.

Example 3: Student A5 – Word Journal



Following the introduction of the new vocabulary words, the group engaged in the same popcorn style reading of Kavik the Wolf Dog which was used by the context cue instruction group. During the reading, as students read a word, which had been used in the direct instruction word activity, they reviewed the meaning of the word.

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Continued reading group practice. Except for the first day of instruction, the individual word meaning instruction was preceded by a review of the vocabulary words that had been learned on the pervious day. The purpose for the inclusion of the vocabulary review was based on the research of Jenkins, Matlock and Slocum (1989) found that more learning takes place when children receive more practice in learning individual word meanings. An individual exposure to an individual word meaning produces small amounts of learning. As practice and exposure to word meanings increase, the amount of learning that occurs also increases.

The review was set up so that the children would have three exposures to each set of vocabulary words. There were fourteen sets of vocabulary words; a set for each chapter of the book except chapter one, which had been divided into two sets because of the number of unknown words to be practiced was greater than any other chapter. A set of words usually consisted of five to eight words. The review proceeded as follows: On day one, 5 new words from chapter one were introduced to the children. The following day, the children reviewed the 5 words they learned on day one and then they were introduced to 5 new words from chapter one. On day three, the reading group reviewed the words learned on day one and two and then learned the set of words for chapter two. Day two and day three words were reviewed on day four before the introduction of a new set of words from chapter three. Once the children had been exposed to a set of words three times, that set of words was not reviewed for the rest of the

instructional time. This review pattern continued throughout the instructional time.

Data Collection and Analysis

Vocabulary pretest. As mentioned previously, the vocabulary pretest was used to determine which words, from a list of 80, were unknown by the individual students and collectively unknown by each group. The test was also used to determine the vocabulary knowledge level of each group. In scoring the pretest, the student's responses were divided into three categories, correct responses (CR), partially correct responses (PCR) and incorrect responses (ICR). A correct response was a meaningful definition and received a score of 4. Partially correct responses were responses that gave part of the definition but were missing some part of the meaning. A partially correct response was given a score of 2. Incorrect responses included improper definitions or no response was given. An incorrect response received a score of 0.

Vocabulary posttests. At the end of the instructional period, the two reading groups were given a vocabulary posttest and a deriving meaning from context posttest. The words in isolation vocabulary pretest (see appendix A) and posttest (see appendix I) measured children's knowledge of the same 80 vocabulary words but the vocabulary posttest was an altered form of the vocabulary pretest. The posttest was divided into eight sections. Four of the sections included ten words in isolation. Similar to the pretest, children were still asked to write their own definition for the words. The words in isolation sections accounted for 41 of the vocabulary words included in the test. All of the words

chosen for the words in isolation sections were words that had been unknown by either of the two instructional groups at the time of the vocabulary pretest. The remaining 39 words were divided into four sections consisting of multiple choice questions. A word was given along with four options. Three of the options were definitions and the fourth option was "I don't know." The children were required to choose the correct definition from the four choices. Each test section was presented in an alternating pattern between the words in isolation and the multiple-choice tasks. The purpose behind this patterning was to avoid presenting the difficult sections of the test, the words in isolation sections, all at once. I wished to evenly spread the difficult sections of the test throughout the test to prevent frustration and test taking weariness.

The administration of the posttest was slightly different from the administration of the pretest. During the administration of the posttest I read the test to the students to avoid wrong answers that were due to misreading a word or definition. After every child had answered every question on the test, I gave the students an opportunity to ask for a clue for any word in the words in isolation sections that they were unable to define. The students were all given the same clue for each word. The clue was the usage of the word in a sentence (see appendix J). The students were required to make a star next to any word that they wrote a definition for after having received a clue from me.

The students did not receive clues for the multiple-choice sections of the test since I felt that selecting the correct definition from a list seemed to be a less difficult task than constructing a definition from memory. An analysis of the test

results confirmed my assumptions. The children were able to select a correct answer for almost all of the multiple-choice questions but they did not provide as many answers for the word in isolation questions without a context clue. I was not interested in measuring the students' ability to memorize word meanings. Rather, I was interested in observing whether students could recall word meanings when the words were used meaningfully. This was the primary reason for providing students with a clue, using the word in a sentence, on the words in isolation tasks. The purpose was to ascertain whether context clues could help students remember the meaning of the words they had learned.

When scoring the posttests, the responses that the students provided were divided into five categories: (1) correct response (CR); (2) partially correct response (PCR); (3) correct response with a clue (CRwc); (4) partially correct response with a clue (PCRwc); and (5) incorrect responses (ICR). A meaningful and appropriate definition that was given without the aid of a clue was considered a correct response. All correct responses received a score of 4. Correct responses that were given with the aid of a clue were given a score of 3. Partially correct responses, a response that gave part of the definition of a word but was missing an important part of the definition, received a score of 2. Partially correct responses that were given after having heard a clue were given a score of 1. Incorrect responses were defined as incorrect definitions, not providing a response to a question or circling "I don't know" as an answer for the multiple choice questions. All incorrect responses received a score of 0.

To account for gain scores, the vocabulary pretest was used to see if the two instructional groups were the same on the dependent variable, vocabulary knowledge. In other words, the vocabulary pretests were used to show that each group started off with essentially the same vocabulary knowledge before instruction. The vocabulary posttest scores, on the other hand, were used to make a direct comparison between the vocabulary knowledge gained by each group.

In addition to the vocabulary knowledge scores, the posttests were also used to gain information regarding the student's ability to use context clues to remember the meaning of a word. The number of times students used context cues was calculated for each individual student and each group. The data collected was used to view whether the words in context group was more likely to use context clues to determine the meaning of word they had learned but were unable to remember than the words in isolation group.

After a period of four weeks each group was given another vocabulary test developed in a similar manner as the previous posttest but the format was changed slightly (see appendix K). The words that were previously used in the words in isolation sections of the first posttest were used for the multiple-choice section of the second posttest and the words previously used in the multiple-choice section were used for the words in isolation tasks. My purpose for switching the sections was to observe how the difficulty level of the questions affects the student's ability to remember the meaning of a word. The second

purpose of this second vocabulary posttest was to measure retention of vocabulary knowledge between the two groups.

Deriving meaning from context pretest. Before instruction began, all of the students in the study were given a word in context pretest to measure each student's ability to use context to derive the meaning of unknown words from context. When the pretests were scored, the responses the students gave were divided into three different categories: (1) correct response (CR); (2) partially correct response (PR) and (3) incorrect response (ICR). An answer was categorized as a correct response if it contained a clearly stated definition or a synonym. A partial response was considered to be an answer that contained part of the definition but was missing an essential part of the meaning. If a response was not given or the response given was not correct, this was considered an incorrect response.

I also looked for patterns in student usage of context clues between the students who derived meaning from context and those who did not. While analyzing the audiotapes and notes taken during the deriving meaning from context pretest, I developed a second coding system. In addition to the response codes used for scoring the tests, I also developed a coding system that allowed me to calculate the number of times students either used context to derive word meaning or did not use context to derive word meaning. The three previously mentioned categories were divided into two additional categories, (1) No context cues used (NC) and (2) context cues uses (CC). The pretest of the participant's

ability to use context to derive word meanings was scored on a graded scale. Following is an example of the coding and scoring that was used:

1. CR-CC = 5 (Correct response with context cues)
2. CR-NC = 4 (Correct response with no context cues)
3. PCR-CC = 3 (Partially correct response with context cues)
4. PCR-NC = 2 (Partially correct response with no context cues)
5. ICR-CC = 1 (Incorrect response with context cues)
6. ICR-NC = 0 (Incorrect response with no context cues)

Deriving meaning from context posttests. Improvement in the students' ability to use context to derive word meaning after receiving context cue instruction was the primary focus for collecting data. I compared the responses of students who received context cue instruction with the students who received definition instruction to determine if context cue instruction significantly raised the students' ability to use context to derive word meaning.

The deriving meaning from context posttests (see appendix L) were modeled after the deriving meaning from context pretest. As with the pretest, I adapted passages for the test, to ensure the usage of explicit text. The context passages were adapted from passages in How to Build a Better Vocabulary, (1992) and Word Smart Junior (1995), self-help books for building the vocabulary of children between the ages of ten and thirteen. Adapted sections of decoding tests from the Study Guide for Howell, Fox, and Morehead's Curriculum-Based Evaluation (1993) were also used for a few of the passages found on the posttest. The posttest consisted of 10 passages; each containing one underlined unknown word. The children had to write a definition for the underlined word and provide a written explanation for why they thought the definition they chose was correct.

Due to time constraints, the students did not meet individually with me. Instead I met with each group separately and administered the posttest in a whole group setting. I read a passage as the participants followed along silently in their head and instead of providing verbal explanations for their answers they were asked to provide written explanations. The second posttest contained 10 passages with an underlined unknown word and the children were required to provide a written response for each question.

The format of the first posttest varied from the format of the pretest and second posttest. The first posttest consisted of 10 passages with an underlined unknown word but half of those passages were multiple choice answers and the other half were written response. After administering the first posttest, I observed that the multiple-choice questions did not render adequate information about the students' ability to derive meaning from context. The students could easily test each of the choices in the sentence in order to determine which answer was correct without ever using any of the context cues to determine the words meaning. For this reason the results of the first posttest were excluded from this study and a second posttest was given.

The purpose of the second deriving meaning from context posttest was to collect data regarding students' ability to use context to derive word meaning following vocabulary instruction. I used the students' explanations to judge whether training in context cue usage affected a student's ability to use context to derive unknown word meanings and if they benefited from the strategy

instruction. The same coding and scoring system used for scoring the words in context pretest were also used for this posttest.

Delimitation and Limitations of the Study

Much of the research included in the literature review suggests a direct link between vocabulary knowledge and reading comprehension. Although reading comprehension is important and a child's vocabulary knowledge does affect her/his ability to comprehend what s/he has read, the primary focus of this study has been limited to a study of instructional methods for improving vocabulary knowledge and the ability to derive the meaning of unknown words from context. Knowing vocabulary and how to determine the meaning of unknown words when reading is one of the fundamental skills required before reading comprehension can occur.

Due to the nature of this study there were some inherent limitations that evolved. First of all, the sample size was small. Only eleven students from a multi-grade classroom (fourth and fifth grade) participated in the study. The results of this study may not be representative of all fourth and fifth grade students. Secondly, incidental acquisition of words may have accounted for differences among the scores. According to research, students acquire words incidentally through reading. Since it would be unethical and poor practice to limit the subjects' exposure to words by not allowing them to do any independent reading, I could not be entirely sure that word learning was completely affected by the instructional procedures. According to Nagy, Herman and Anderson (1985), social interactions can also account for word learning. Finally, prior word

knowledge was also a limitation of this study that could not be controlled. Vocabulary knowledge and learning from context go hand in hand. Avid readers incidentally learn vocabulary words through context. Children with larger vocabulary levels have an advantage to those with smaller vocabularies and are more likely to learn the meaning of unknown words from context. The very nature of a child's vocabulary background could affect her/his ability or inability to learn from context.

The nature of the text used during context cue instruction and assessment of deriving meaning from context skills was another limiting factor of this study. The purpose of this study was to examine students' ability to use natural context to derive the meaning of unknown words. Children deal with natural text on a regular basis and I was interested in examining whether practicing the deriving meaning from context strategy would aid in the transfer of the skill. Based on the findings of Herman, Anderson, Pearson and Nagy (1987) the nature of a text can affect the ability of the reader to use the context in the text to infer word meanings. Herman et al. (1987) investigated the effect of different text features on incidental acquisition of vocabulary words while reading. The researchers found that certain text features do illicit more incidental word learning in both low and high ability readers. In fact, Herman et al. (1987) suggested that low readers are capable of recalling information from a text written in an explicit and elaborate manner but have difficulty recalling information from implicit text. Since implicit text is often lacking in information and contextual cues, this type of text would in fact inhibit the instruction in the usage of the context cue strategy. Unfortunately,

the natural text encountered during independent reading is not always context rich and explicit. Natural text can often contain ambiguous context or lack information necessary for deriving the meaning of unknown words. Although I took care in choosing the text used in the study, I was limited by the natural nature of the text. The contextual cues encountered when deriving meaning were not always explicit. The nature of the text often required that the participants use higher level reasoning skills when inferring the meaning of a word from context.

Although implicit and explicit text was used during context cue instruction, the posttest assessment passages used to measure the ability of students to use context to derive word meaning were not implicit. The assessment passages were explicit based on the rationale that a strategy for using context to derive word meaning would be taught and therefore the passages used for the assessment of that skill should promote the usage of the strategy. If the passages on the test were implicit rather than explicit then the results of the assessment would be confounded by the difficulty of the passages. I was not interested in observing the students' ability or inability to understand difficult passages but rather I wished to measure the participants' ability to use the context cue strategy for deriving word meanings on their own after receiving instruction.

The results of this study are not generalizable to all reading situations. The instruments used to measure students' ability to use context to derive meaning from context are limited by their explicit nature. The passages were

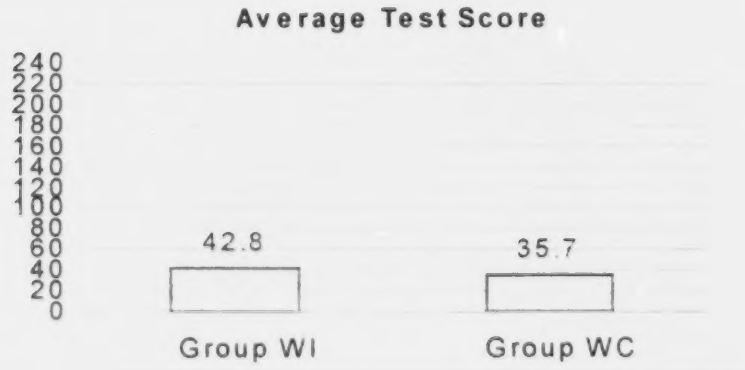
taken from natural text but reworded in some cases to be more explicit in nature rather than implicit. In this study I only measured children's ability to use context to derive word meaning when given an explicit passage.

Results

Vocabulary Pretest

Descriptive data was collected from the vocabulary pretest. The scores were used to make both within group and between group comparisons. The pretest scores served as a baseline of students' vocabulary knowledge. The vocabulary pretest was also used to determine the number of vocabulary words, from the list of 80 words that were not known by the students. The vocabulary pretest revealed that the words in isolation group (WI) knew six more words than the words in context group (WC). Comparing the correct responses between the two instructional groups revealed that the correct response mean on the vocabulary pretest of the WI group was slightly higher than the correct response mean of the WC. The WI group's mean test score was 42.8 and WC group's mean test score was 35.67 out of possible 320 points. Although there was a difference between the mean test score of each group, the difference was not great. Essentially both groups started out with the same level of vocabulary knowledge (see graph 1).

Graph 1 – Vocabulary Pretest



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An analysis of the vocabulary pretest results revealed that more words were unknown by the WC group than the WI group. The difference between the number of words that were unknown by Group WC and Group WI was not great. 34 of the 80 words from the vocabulary pretest were words that were unknown by both groups. I identified these words as completely unknown. A list of the unknown words can be seen in Table 1 on the following page. The remaining 46 words from the test were defined correctly by an average of three participants out of a total of eleven participants.

Comparing the individual results of the participants in each instructional group reveals that the vocabulary knowledge level among the individuals of the WI group and the WC group were diverse (see graph 2). Although some of the scores were close, none of the students were starting out with the same exact level of vocabulary knowledge. The standard deviation of the WC group (21.59) was slightly greater than the standard deviation of the WI group (21.19). Both groups had individuals with higher levels of vocabulary knowledge and lower levels of vocabulary knowledge than the mean. Neither group had an abundant number of students with high levels of vocabulary knowledge or low levels of vocabulary knowledge.

TABLE 1: VOCABUALRY PRE TEST – UNKNOWN WORD RESULTS

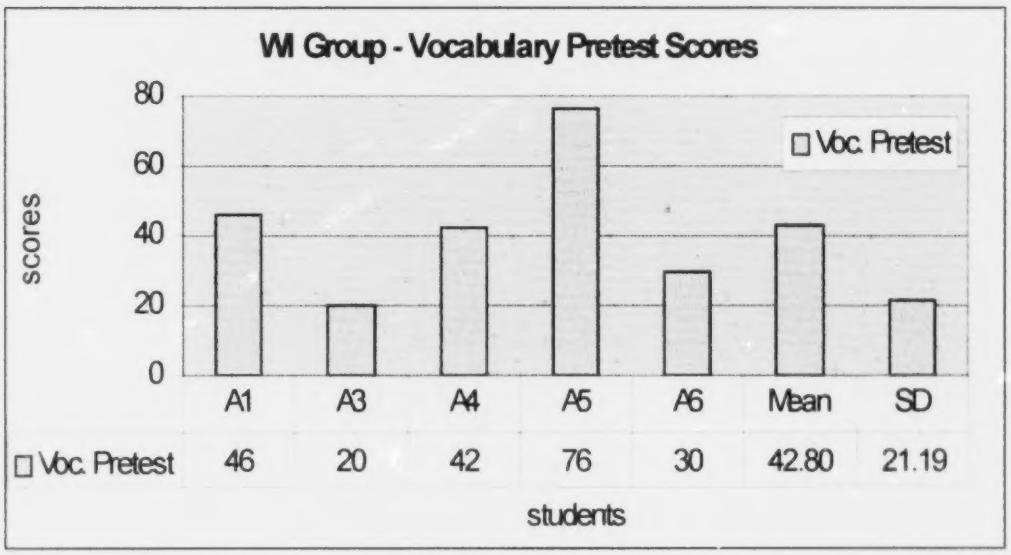
Unknown Words For Group WI	Unknown Words For Group WC
5. bedlam *	5. bedlam *
6. slaked *	6. slaked *
7. dignity *	7. dignity *
9. dapper *	9. dapper *
10. malamute	11. traits *
11. traits *	13. leaden *
13. leaden *	14. enclosure
16. strewn *	16. strewn *
17. strident *	17. strident *
18. ravenously *	18. ravenously *
19. rouse *	19. rouse *
21. ridge	22. grotesque *
22. grotesque *	23. gauging *
23. gauging *	25. makeshift *
24. haul	26. barren *
25. makeshift *	27. cocksure
26. barren *	28. ordeal *
27. cocksure	29. diagnosis *
28. ordeal *	30. surmise *
29. diagnosis *	32. cripple *
30. surmise *	34. tenacity
32. cripple *	37. erect
33. pallet	39. dormant *
39. dormant *	40. coax *
40. coax *	41. deftly *
41. deftly *	44. excursion *
44. excursion *	46. tundra
47. mongrel *	47. mongrel *
52. wharves *	49. quested
53. acrid *	50. venture
54. gimp *	52. wharves *
62. aloof *	53. acrid *
63. feint *	54. gimp *
64. jugular *	55. circuit
66. resent *	58. stealthily
67. geyser	59. seething
70. astray *	62. aloof *
71. crocuses	63. feint *
75. emaciated *	64. jugular *
76. defiant	65. fatigue
79. deliberation *	66. resent *
	70. astray *
	74. specter
* unknown by both groups	75. emaciated *
	77. descend
	78. plaguing
	79. deliberation *

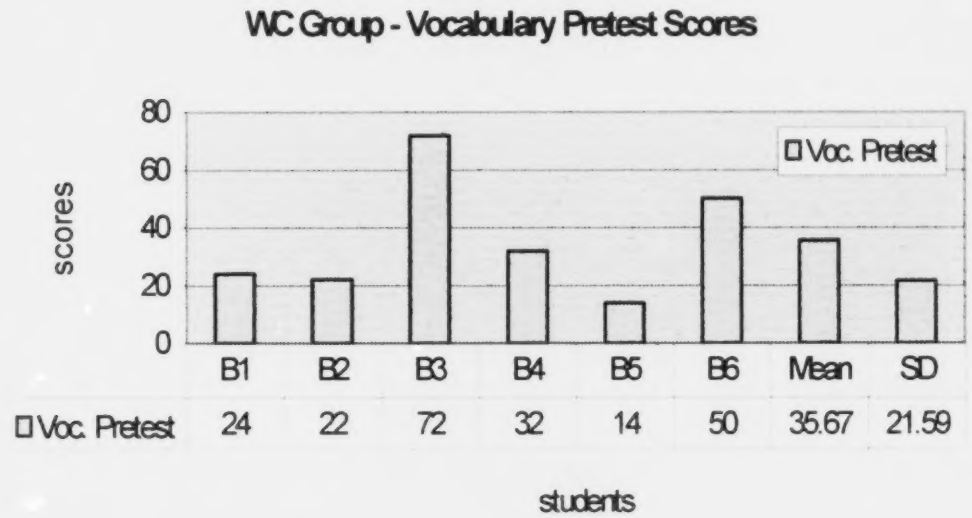
Group WI Total unknown words
41

Group WC Total unknown words
47

*** Unknown by both groups**
34

Graph 2 – Individual Vocabulary Pretest Scores





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The standard deviation of the vocabulary posttest scores for the WI group was also much greater than the standard deviation of the WC group. There was more variability among the individual scores of the WI group than the individual scores of the WC group. The participants' results for each of the three-vocabulary tests can be seen in graph 4 on the following page. On an average, the participants in WC group experienced greater increases in their vocabulary scores from the vocabulary pretest to the first posttest. The lowest score received by a member of the WC group on the first vocabulary posttest was 184. This same student received a score of 14 on the vocabulary pretest, which was the lowest score of all the participants in the study. The lowest score received by a member of the WI group on the vocabulary posttest was 147. This same participant received a score of 20 on the vocabulary pretest. All of the participants in the WC group who scored lower on their vocabulary pretest, B5 (14), B2 (22), B1 (24) scored much higher on the first vocabulary posttest than their peers in the WI group, A3 (20), A6 (30), who also scored low on the vocabulary pretest. In general, the vocabulary score increases after the first vocabulary posttests were more consistent for the WC group than the WI group.

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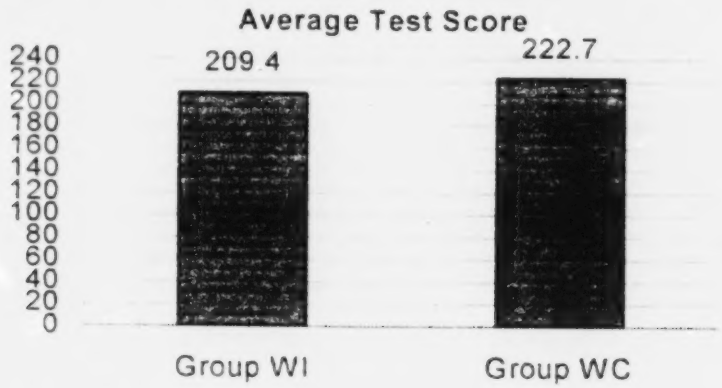
Vocabulary Posttest #1

All of the participants in the study did experience vocabulary knowledge gains after instruction. The members of the WI group appeared to experience less vocabulary learning and growth than the members of the WC instructional group, especially considering their pretest scores. (see graph 3).

Graph 3 – Vocabulary Posttest #1 Results



Although small, the vocabulary knowledge gain of the WC group was greater than the vocabulary knowledge gain of WI group. Before instruction, the WI group had a higher vocabulary mean score than the WC group on the vocabulary pretest. Following instruction, the WC group obtained a higher vocabulary mean score than the WI group and the amount of gain between the vocabulary pretest and first posttest was greater for the WC group. (see Table 2).

Table 2 – Vocabulary Pre and Posttest

WI Group	**Pre**	**Post #1**	**Gain**
Mean	42.80	209.40	166.60
Standard Deviation	21.19	58.24	37.05
WC Group			
Mean	35.67	222.67	187
Standard Deviation	21.59	33.90	12.31

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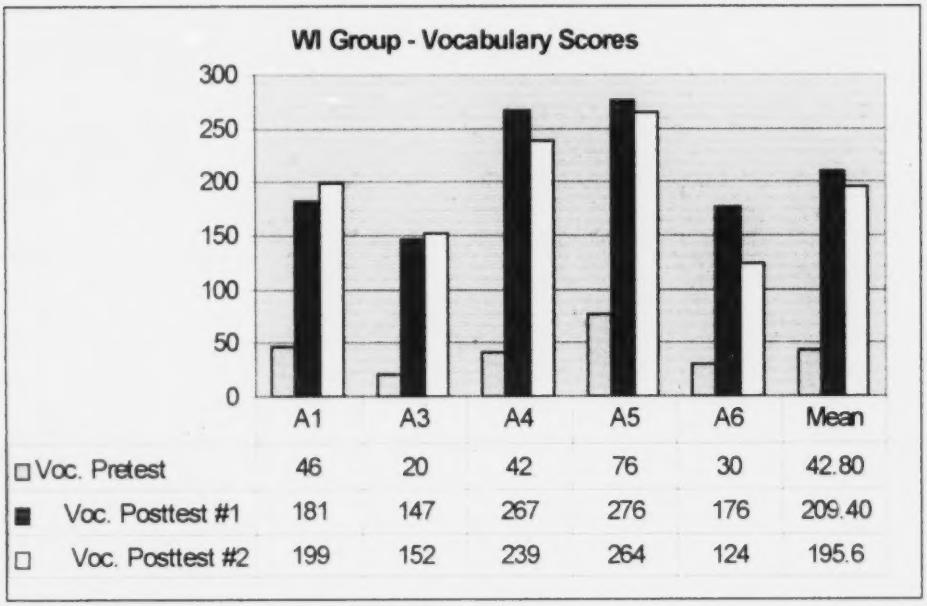
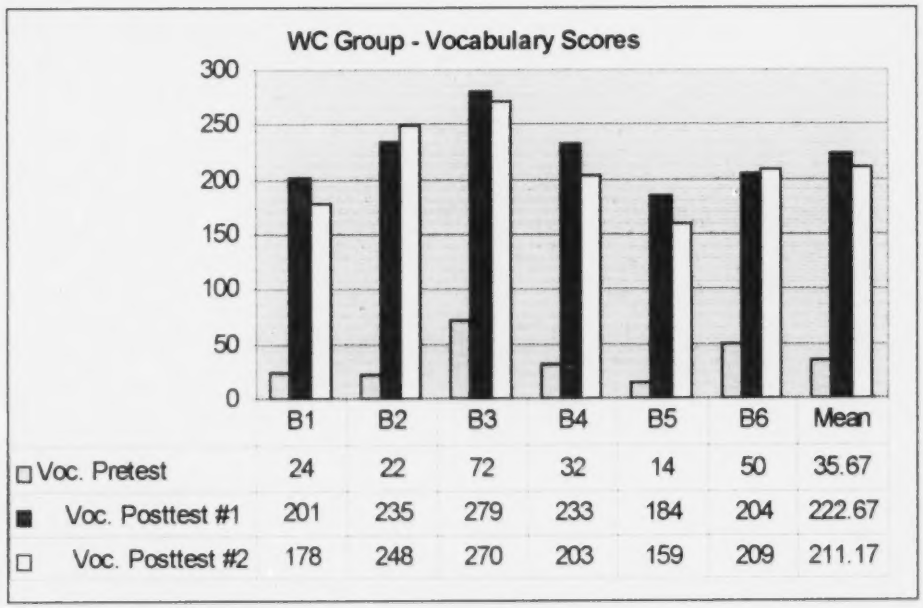
Graph 4 – Individual Vocabulary Pre and Posttest scores



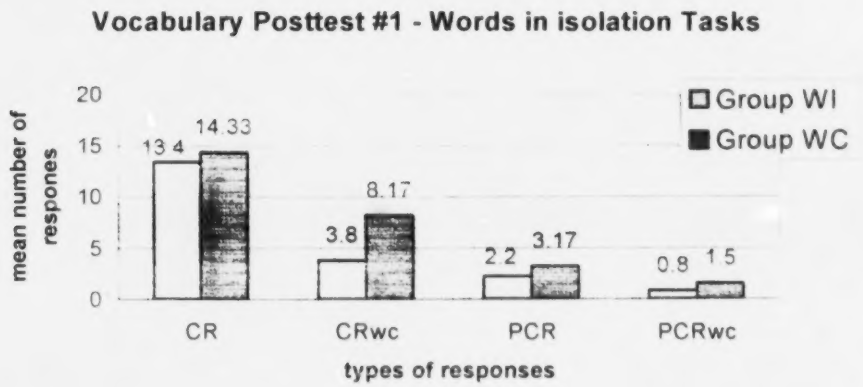
	A1	A3	A4	A5	A6	Mean
Voc. Pretest	46	20	42	76	30	42.80
Voc. Posttest #1	181	147	267	276	176	209.40
Voc. Posttest #2	199	152	239	264	124	195.6



	B1	B2	B3	B4	B5	B6	Mean
Voc. Pretest	24	22	72	32	14	50	35.67
Voc. Posttest #1	201	235	279	233	184	204	222.67
Voc. Posttest #2	178	248	270	203	159	209	211.17

Another difference between the two instructional groups was the types of responses given on the words in isolation sections of the first posttest (see graph 5). In addition to scoring the vocabulary posttest, I also calculated the average number of responses given in each of the following categories: (1) correct responses (CR), (2) correct responses with a clue (CRwc), (3) partially correct responses (PCR) and (4) partially correct responses with a clue (PCRwc). There were 41 words the students had to define in the words in isolation section of the vocabulary posttest test. The WC group averaged a higher number of correct responses (CR), correct responses with clues (CRwc), partially correct responses (PCR), and partially correct responses with clues (PCRwc) than did the WI group. (see graph 5).

Graph 5 – Response Analysis of Posttest #1



Vocabulary Posttest #2

A second vocabulary posttest was given to measure for retention of vocabulary meanings over time. The mean vocabulary score on the second

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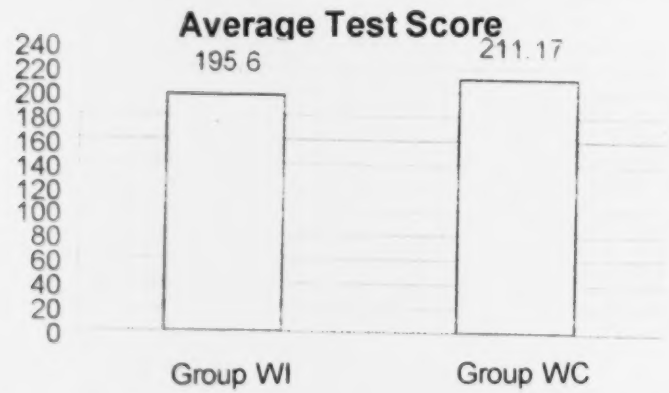
vocabulary posttest was lower for both instructional groups than the mean vocabulary score on the first vocabulary posttest. (see Table 3).

Table 3 – Vocabulary Posttest #1 and #2

WI Group	**Post #1**	**Post #2**	**Difference**
Mean	209.40	195.6	- 13.8
Standard Deviation	58.24	58.31	
WC Group	**Post #1**	**Post #2**	**Difference**
Mean	222.67	211.17	- 11.5
Standard Deviation	33.90	41.74	

The difference between the first and second vocabulary posttest means scores were small. The WI group's mean dropped 13.8 points and the WC group mean test score dropped 11.5. The mean score of the words in context group still remained higher than the mean score of the words in isolation group after the second posttest. (see graph 6).

Graph 6 – Vocabulary Posttest #2



The variability between the individual test scores between the first and second posttest did not change much for the WI group. The standard deviation of the first vocabulary test for the WI group was 58.24 and after the second

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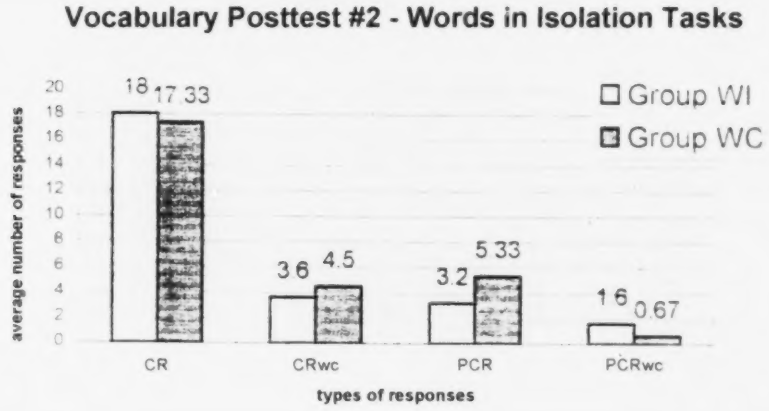
vocabulary posttest the standard deviation between scores was 58.31 (see Table 3). On the other hand, the standard deviation between the individual scores of WC group was greater after the second posttest. There was more variability among the individual scores of the WC group after the second vocabulary posttest than after the first vocabulary posttest.

Graph 7 – Response analysis of words in isolation task



For both instructional groups the mean number of correct and partially correct responses on the words in isolation tasks of the second vocabulary posttest (see graph 7) were greater than the mean number of correct and partially correct responses from the first posttest. (see graph 5). Both instructional groups also had a decrease in the mean number of correct answers with clues after the second posttest. The WI group went from a mean of 3.8 (see graph 5) correct answers with clues to a mean of 3.6 (see graph 7) and the WC group went for a mean of 8.17 (see graph 5) to a mean of 4.5 (see graph 7). Clues were used less often to obtain correct responses on the second vocabulary posttest than the first vocabulary posttest. The number of partially

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correct responses with clues also decreased for the WC group after the second posttest. On the other hand, the WI group's number of partially correct responses with clues actually increased slightly after the second vocabulary posttest. The WI group gave slightly more correct and partially correct responses with clues, whereas, the WC group gave slightly more correct with clues and partially correct responses than the WI group on the second vocabulary posttest.

Deriving Meaning from Context Pretest

The responses to the pretest/interview were used to describe the students' ability to derive meaning from context. The results of the scoring can be seen in table 4. The WC group averaged a slightly higher mean score (17) than the WI group (15.4) but the difference between the groups was minimal.

Table 4 – Deriving Meaning from Context Pretest Scores

WI Group		**WC Group**	
Students	**test scores**	**Students**	**test scores**
A1	15	**B1**	24
A3	11	**B2**	14
A4	17	**B3**	13
A5	22	**B4**	21
A6	12	**B5**	17
		B6	13
Mean	15.4	**Mean**	17
Standard Deviation	4.39	**Standard Deviation**	4.60

The deriving meaning from context test results suggest that the individuals in both instructional groups possessed a similar ability to derive word meaning from context, however, what is not revealed are the types of responses the students gave when using context to derive word meaning. The three possible responses that a student could give were correct response (CR), partially correct

response (PCR) and incorrect response (ICR). The number of responses given by each group in each of the three response categories was calculated (see Table 5).

Table 5: Deriving Meaning from Context Pretest

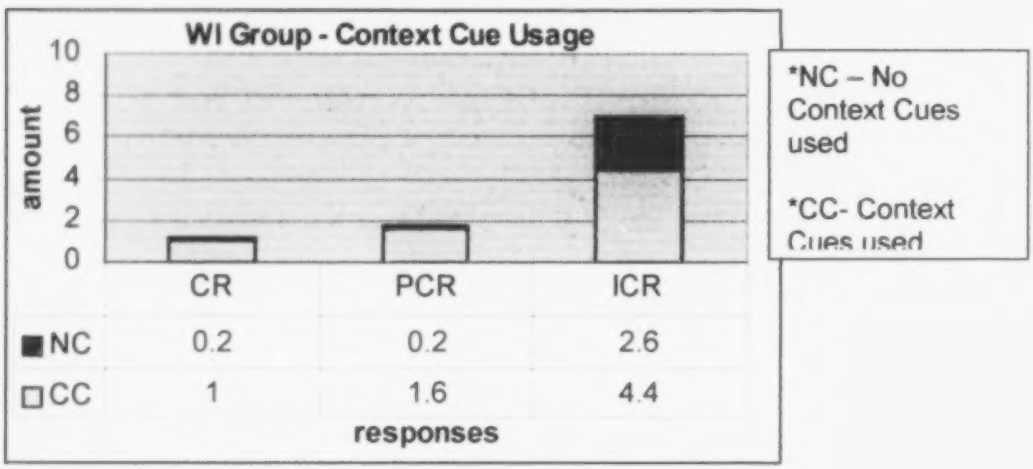
Words in Isolation Group				Words in Context Group			
	CR	PCR	ICR		CR	PCR	ICR
A1	0	4	3	B1	2	4	4
A3	0	1	9	B2	0	2	8
A4	1	2	7	B3	1	1	8
A5	4	1	5	B4	3	3	4
A6	1	1	8	B5	1	3	6
				B6	1	4	6
Mean	1.2	1.8	6.4	Mean	1.33	2.83	6

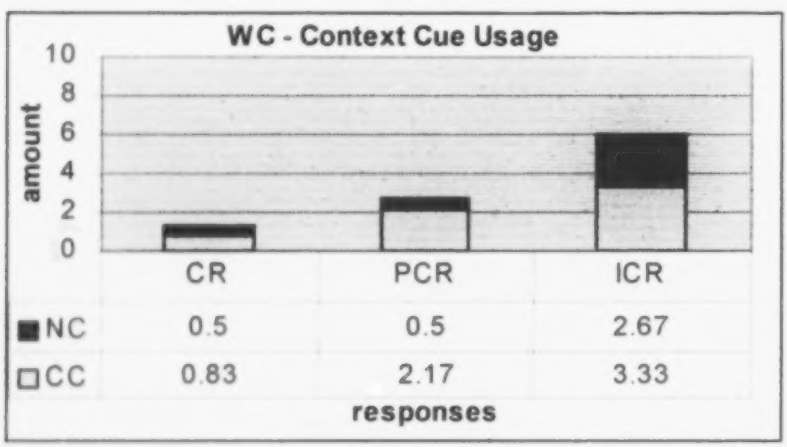
The WC averaged slightly more correct and partially correct responses than the WI group. The difference between the mean number of correct and partially correct responses was minimal. Both groups possessed essentially the same level of ability to use context to derive word meaning at the pretest. The high mean of incorrect responses for both groups should not be overlooked. Although both groups did possess the ability to use context to derive the meaning of unfamiliar words from context, their ability to do so was limited.

The extent to which each group used context cues to derive word meaning and how the use or non-use of context cues affected the type of response given before instruction can be seen in Graph 8. The WI group had a higher mean of correct responses with the identification of context cues (CR-CC) than did the WC group. The mean number of partially correct responses with context cues (PCR-CC) was higher for the WC group than the WI group. The WC group's mean number of correct and partially correct responses without the identification

of context cues (CR-NC and PCR-NC) were higher than the WI group's mean. Both instructional groups had a high mean of incorrect responses with or without the identification of context cues (ICR-CC or (ICR-NC). The WI group had a higher mean of incorrect responses with the identification of context cues (ICR-CC) than did the WC group but the WC group did have a slightly higher mean of incorrect responses without the identification context clues (ICR- NC) than did the WI group.

Graph 8 – Deriving Meaning from Context Pretest





Deriving meaning from context posttest

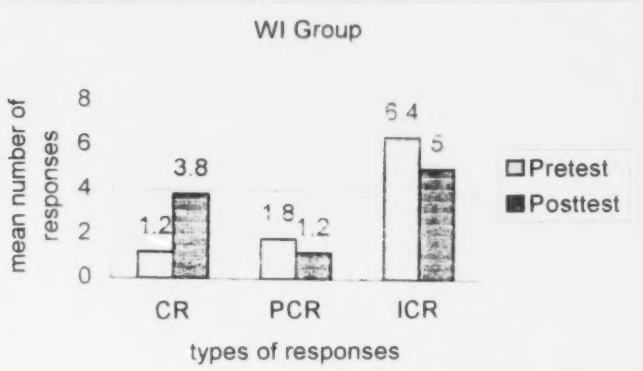
The mean score for the deriving meaning from context posttest was greater for both instructional groups than their mean score for the deriving meaning from context pretest (see table 6). There was a four-point difference between the WI group's mean for the deriving meaning from context posttest than the mean for the WC group, with the WC group scoring higher. The WC group score gain was two points greater than the WI group score gain.

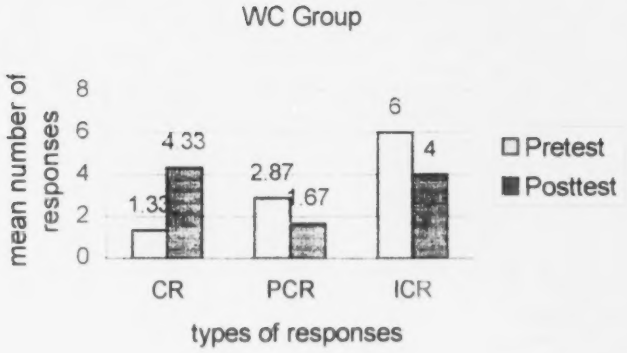
Table 6 – Deriving Meaning from Context Pre and Posttest

WI Group	**Pre**	**Post**	**Gain**
Mean	15.4	31.4	16
Standard Deviation	4.39	9.29	4.9
WC Group			
Mean	17	35	18
Standard Deviation	4.60	8.34	3.74

Both instructional groups increased their mean number of correct responses from the deriving meaning from context pretest to the posttest. (see Graph 9). From the pretest to the posttest there was a decrease in the number of partially correct responses given by both instructional groups. As the mean number of partial responses decreased the mean number of correct responses increased for both the WI group and the WC group.

Graph 9 – Deriving Meaning from Context Response Analysis





As the number of correct responses increased for both instructional groups so did the usage of context cues. The WC group provided more correct responses and partially correct responses with the identification of context cues than did the WI group (see graph 10). Even after instruction, both groups still provided incorrect responses even though they were able to identify context cues. The WI group's mean number of incorrect responses with the identification of context cues was less than the WC group mean number of incorrect

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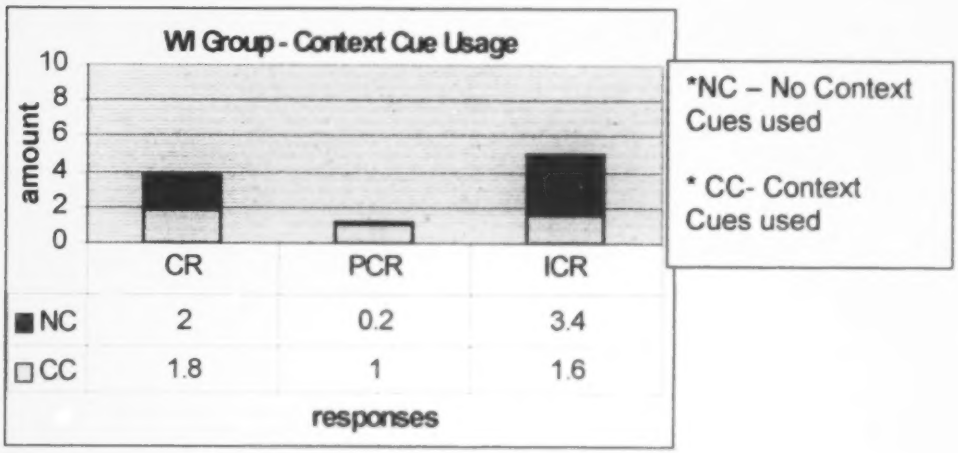
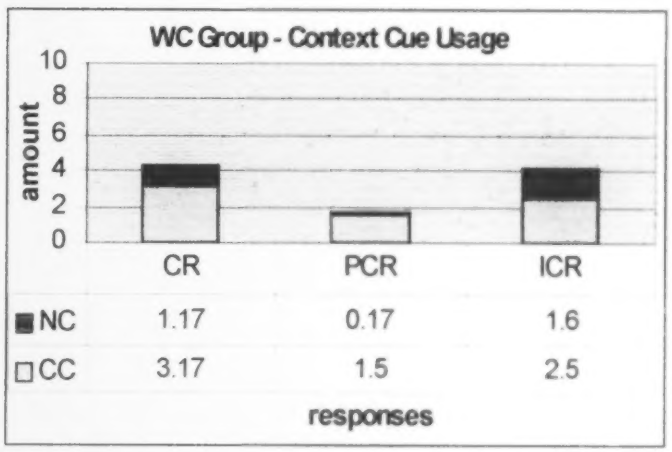
responses with the identification of context cues. The WI group on the other hand had a higher mean number of incorrect responses without the identification of context cues than did the WC group. The WC group used context cues more often then the WI group on the deriving meaning from context posttest.

Graph 10 – Deriving Meaning form Context Posttest





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Student Attitude and Behaviors

In addition to collecting quantitative data regarding the effectiveness of context cue instruction through testing, I also observed the students at work and took field notes on the days I met with each group. In reviewing my field notes, I observed a common trend among the overall attitude of each instructional group. The WI group was less interested in group work than the WC group. The WI group had little interest in reading and expressed their disinterest by saying things such as "Do we have to read to today?", " Why do we have to do this?" or "I do not want do this today." The WC group, on the other hand, often came to the group excited to read or excited to tell me about parts of the book they had read on their own.

A behavior that was observed in the WC group and not in the WI group was the usage of previously learned words to create definitions for new words encountered during the story. The nature of the instruction that the WC group received allowed for more student participation than the direct instruction the WI group received. The WC group was responsible for discussing possible definitions for unknown words they encountered during reading and creating their own definitions. On several occasions the participants in the WC group used words they had learned in the group in their definitions for new words they were learning. For example the students used the word 'coaxed' to explain the meaning of 'lured', an unknown word they had just encountered. The students had discussed the meaning of the word 'coaxed' seven instructional days prior to discussing the meaning of word 'lure'.

Discussion

Is providing children with instruction in deriving the meaning of unknown words from context a more beneficial method of teaching vocabulary than direct instruction in individual word meanings? This was the major question that guided my research. On the surface, the results of this study seem to suggest that vocabulary instruction in general is beneficial. Both the WI group and the WC group experienced vocabulary growth that was retained over time. In order to clarify the results of my study and to help me focus on the results, I broke my grand tour question down into more specific sub questions. These sub questions are used to discuss the results of this study and delve into a deeper understanding of the findings. As each question is addressed individually, it will become evident that WC group appears to have experienced benefits from their instruction that was not experienced by the WI group.

Will context cue instruction lead to greater increases in vocabulary knowledge than direct instruction in word meanings? Prior to instruction, the vocabulary pretest mean for the WI group was greater than the mean for the WC group, following instruction the WC group preformed better on both vocabulary posttests. The WC group had a higher vocabulary mean than the WI group after both vocabulary posttests. There was a greater amount of gain between the vocabulary pretest and first vocabulary posttest for the WC group. Even though the mean scores for both groups decreased after the second vocabulary posttest, the WC group mean still remained higher than the WI group mean. The difference between the vocabulary pretest and second posttest means revealed

that the WC group retained more vocabulary word meanings than the WI group. Deriving meaning from context instruction did increase the vocabulary knowledge of the students in the WC group and it lead to greater increases in vocabulary knowledge than direct instruction in word meanings.

The type of instruction that the WC group received appeared to have more of an effect on student vocabulary learning than the type of instruction that was received by the WI group. It appears that the instruction that the WC group received may have been more consistent in producing vocabulary gains for each student. All of the participants from the WC group who scored lower on the vocabulary pretest obtained higher scores on the vocabulary posttest after instruction than their peers in the WI group who scored low on the vocabulary pretest scores. There were greater differences between individual vocabulary scores of the first posttest among the members of the WI group than the members of the WC group.

Are students who receive context cue instruction more apt to use a context cue strategy for deriving the meaning of unknown words than students who do not receive context cue instruction? The results of the vocabulary posttest suggest that deriving meaning from context instruction appeared to be more beneficial than direct instruction in word meanings in helping children learn the meaning of new words and remembering the learned meanings. Not only did context instruction appear to be related to more consistent results on the vocabulary posttests but it also appeared that deriving meaning from context instruction was related to student usage of context cues to remember the

meaning of words they had already learned. On first and second vocabulary posttests, the WC group gave more correct responses with clues than the WI group. The students in the WC group appeared to use more context clues, the usage of the word in a sentence, when they were unable to remember the meaning of a word than the students in the WI group. The usage of context clues may have been what raised the vocabulary scores of the words in context group.

Although the vocabulary posttest results suggest a positive relationship between context cue instruction and the usage of context clues out of context to remember the meaning of a previously learned word, the results of the deriving meaning form context posttest were less conclusive. The results of the deriving meaning from context posttest revealed that there was little difference between each groups' usage of context cues in determining the meaning of an unknown word from context following instruction. The WC group did use context cues slightly more often than the WI group but the usage of context cues to determine the meaning of an unknown word was still inconsistent.

How does instruction in deriving the meaning of unknown words from context affect the ability of children to use naturally occurring text to learn the meaning of unfamiliar words. The deriving meaning from context pretest results revealed that both instructional groups had a limited ability to use context cues to derive the meaning of unknown words prior to instruction. Their identification of context cues was inconsistent and did not always relate with their ability to derive the correct meaning of the unknown word in context. In fact both instructional

groups had a high number of incorrect responses with the identification of context cues. To a limited extent some students were able to provide a correct and partially correct definitions for an unknown word with or without identifying a context cue on the deriving meaning from context pretest.

The fact that some students were able to provide correct and partially correct definitions on the deriving meaning from context pretest without identifying any context cue was a very interesting occurrence. The words chosen for the words in context pretest were words that all of the students were unable to define during the words in isolation vocabulary pretest. The fact that some students could provide correct meanings reveals that there is a relationship between context and understanding the meaning of unknown words in context. There was, however, 1 student (A5) from the WI group and 2 students (B4 and B6) from the WC group who did derive correct responses but did not identify any cues when explaining how they came up with their meanings for the unknown words in context. When I questioned why they thought their meaning was correct, student A1 responded, "I just thought of it like that, nothing in the sentence helped" and student B-6 responded, "It just made sense." Student B4, who provided two of the correct responses without identifying cues from the passage, responded that when she replaced the unknown word with her meaning, the sentence sounded good and still made sense. Student B4 was the only participant to use this reading strategy but she did not use the strategy consistently throughout the test to check her answers.

As with the correct responses, a majority of the partially correct responses were accompanied with the identification of context cues from the passages. The same students who provided the correct responses without the identification of context cues were the same students who provided the partial definitions without the identification of context cues on the deriving meaning from context pretest. When questioned how they knew their answers were right, student A5 responded "It just made sense and sounded familiar," and student B6 could not explain how she came up with her partial definition for the word "gauging." Along with student B4, student B6 also provided a partial response for the word "diagnosis" without the identification of context cues. Student B4 and B6's reason for their definition were similar, something in the passage triggered their prior knowledge. The word 'diagnosis' was not completely unknown to them. They had heard it before.

There are three possible reasons why students A5, B4 and B6 were able to provide both correct and partially correct responses without the identification of context cues. First of all, when the students could not explain their responses it is possible that they may have made a lucky guess as in the case of student B6's partial response to the word 'gauging'. Secondly, since student A5 and B4 replied that their answers just seemed to make sense and student B6 practiced replacing the unknown words with words she knew, it is possible that the students may have focused on cues in the passages while reading and synthesized a meaning for the unknown words without recognizing or being able to verbalize what they had done naturally.

Finally, the words were not completely unknown to some of the students. Student B4 and B6 used prior knowledge to develop their partial meanings for the word 'diagnosis.' For example, in the passage containing the unknown word 'diagnosis' student B6 recalled a time when her mother had to go to the hospital for some tests. From her prior knowledge of doctors she inferred that the word diagnosis must have meant tests. Student B4 also relied on her prior knowledge of the TV show "Diagnosis Murder" to infer a partial meaning for the word 'diagnosis.' from the following passage taken from Kavik the Wolf Dog:

Example 4: test passage from the deriving meaning from context pretest

"Common sense ought to tell him it's no use- and you, too."
"Having Vic Walker look at the dog makes a lot of sense to me. He could make a **diagnosis."**
"On a dog?"
"He is a doctor."
"That's right! A doctor not a vet, " Kurt said half angrily. "He won't come out here to look at a dog. I know Vic Walker."

When asked to give a definition for the word diagnosis, student B4 responded, "I have seen the TV. show 'Diagnosis Murder' and on that show doctors try to figure out murders and help people so diagnosis must mean to help him, so he could help the dog and the people."

One pattern observed from the correct and partially correct responses given was that the participants could infer a correct or partial meaning of an unknown word from context but they could not always identify cues in the passages. Even though they could not identify a cue, it did not always mean that the participants were not paying attention to the cues. Children appear to have a

natural ability to derive the meaning of words from context but is not always easy for children to verbalize how they are using context to determine the meaning of unknown words from context. When asked to explain how they knew they had given the correct sentence they responded, "It just made sense" or "The way the sentence sounded made me think that."

Another interesting result of the deriving meaning from context pretest was that the WI group and the WC group had a higher average of incorrect responses with the identification of context cues than incorrect responses without the identification of context cues. In an examination of the incorrect responses that were given with the identification of context cues, I observed that many of the context cues were irrelevant to the meaning of the unknown word. For example student B5 identified the irrelevant context cues 'both' and 'side by side' when trying to derive the meaning of the word 'resented' in the following passage:

Example 5: test passage from the deriving meaning from context pretest

> Several times other lone wolves tried to join them. This they both **resented**, and they stood side by side, growling and showing their teeth. The lone wolf would always back off and turn his tail.

The identification of these irrelevant cues lead to an incorrect understanding of the word 'resented'. When asked to give a definition for the word resented, student B5 responded "I think it means ignore because 'both' and 'side by side' make it seem like they are trying to ignore the other wolf." A more appropriate cue to have focused on would have been 'growling and showing their teeth'. It makes sense that students who identified irrelevant cues or could not identify any cues would produce an incorrect response to an unknown word's meaning.

The number of incorrect responses given by both groups remained relatively high on the deriving meaning from context posttest. The lack of a pattern between the use of cues or non-use of cues and the incorrect responses given by all the children suggests that the participants of both groups lacked skills in using context to derive the meaning of unknown words. When they did identify relevant cues, they lacked the skill to relate the information found in a passage to the meaning of an unknown word. The overwhelming amount of incorrect responses from both groups suggests that the participants' use of context to derive meanings for unknown words was inconsistent.

It appears that the ability to determine word meanings from context is related to the ability to identify and focus on relevant cues in a passage or the background knowledge of the children. In the instances where irrelevant cues were identified, the cues sometimes helped with a partial understanding of the word but could have helped with developing a more precise understanding of the word if paired with more relevant cues from the passage.

A more interesting behavior to discuss is that even when students identified relevant cues they did not always derive the correct meaning of an unknown word. For example, student B2 identified 'growling an showing teeth' as an important clue that helped him figure out the meaning of the word 'resented' in the passage seen in example 5, but the meaning he gave for the word was incorrect. Student B2 responded that 'resented' must mean "the wolves refused to." Although the participants could identify relevant cues they had difficulty with disregarding irrelevant information from the passages and

relating the relevant cues to the unknown word. Another problem that could have led to the participants' incorrect responses was their misinterpretations of the cue's meanings. In other words, they misunderstood the meaning of the cue they chose to help them determine the meaning of an unknown word in the sentence. For example in the following passage taken from the deriving meaning from context pretest:

Example 6: test passage from the deriving meaning form context pretest

> Andy studied the sky, **gauging** the daylight he had left: about another hour. It would be very late when he got home.

Student A3 identified the relevant cues 'studied the sky' and 'gauging the daylight he had left' but responded that the meaning of the word gauging meant, "doing something, twirling around. Student A3 identified relevant cues that could have helped her determine the meaning of the word gauging but her misunderstanding of the context cues lead to an incorrect definition.

The results of the deriving meaning from context posttest, which was given following instruction, were not as positive as the results of the vocabulary posttests. Although the context instruction did have a positive effect on the students' ability to learn and retain vocabulary meanings, neither instructional method had an effect on the student's ability to independently use context cues from natural text to derive the meaning of unknown words from context. The skills used during guided context cue instruction did not transfer into the independent usage of context cues to derive the meaning of unknown words in context. Using context independently appears to be a complex task that may require extensive exposure to context, a strong vocabulary base and an

extensive training in how to use context to derive the meaning of unknown words from context.

Both instructional groups experienced a similar growth in their deriving meaning from context scores following instruction. The growth observed may have been a result of the testing format rather than an improved ability to use context to derive the meaning of unknown words. I am making this assumption because, first of all, the group that did not receive instruction in deriving meaning from context, the WI group, experienced similar increases in their deriving meaning from context scores from the deriving meaning from context pretest to the posttest. Secondly, the passages I chose for the pretest were taken from a fifth grade reading level novel while the passages I chose for the posttest test were taken from the context of books that focus on improving students vocabulary through the use of context. The passages from the words in context posttest may have been more explicit in nature than the passages taken from natural text used in the words in context pretest. The passages for the posttest were taken from books that were written with the purpose to help students deriving the meaning of words from context. The explicitness of the passages of the words in the context posttest may have made the deriving meaning from context tasks in the context posttest easier than the deriving meaning from context tasks in the context pretest and accounted for the increase in the vocabulary knowledge scores.

The WC group did score higher on the words in context posttest than the WI group. Since the WC group's pretest scores were higher than the WI group's

pretest scores and due to the increased explicitness of the passages of words in context posttest, it is unclear whether the WC group's higher scores on the deriving meaning from context posttest were a result of the instruction or individual student ability.

The type of instruction received also did not appear to affect the student's tendency to use context cues effectively to derive the meaning of unknown words when reading an unknown word in context. The WC group did appear to use context cues more often to derive correct and partially correct definitions on the context posttest but their use of context cues was inconsistent. The WC group still had a high number of incorrect responses with the identification of context cues. The fact the students were able to identify context cues does not mean that a student is able to always derive a correct definition for unknown words in context. The students appeared to have difficulty with understanding and synthesizing the context cues into a correct definition for unknown words in context. The WI group had fewer incorrect responses with the identification of context cues than the WC group. The students' ability to use context cues correctly appeared to be related to the individuals' natural ability to use context to derive word meanings and their background knowledge rather than the instruction they received.

Which form of vocabulary instruction encourages and promotes the development and understanding of fuller word meanings? Some difference was found between each group's ability to provide the meaning of words in isolation without any context clues on the words in isolation tasks of the vocabulary

posttests. Although the difference was small, the WC group provided slightly more correct responses than the words in WI group on the first vocabulary posttest. Then on the second vocabulary posttest, the WI group had more correct responses on the words in isolation tasks (see graph 7) than the WC group but once again the difference was very small. Both instructional groups had a higher amount of correct responses on the words in isolation tasks of the second vocabulary posttest than the first vocabulary posttest. A confounding variable that may have affected this change could be that the students had been exposed to the definitions for the words on the first vocabulary posttest. The words that had been used for the words in isolation tasks of the second vocabulary posttest had been used for the multiple-choice questions on the first vocabulary posttest. The words that had been used for the multiple-choice questions on the first vocabulary posttests were used for the words in isolation tasks of the second vocabulary posttest and vice a versa. The exposure to the answers in the multiple choice question of the first posttest may have accounted for the growth in the number of correct responses on the words in isolation task of the second vocabulary posttest.

There was a greater amount of difference in the amount of partially correct responses for the words in isolation tasks between the first and second vocabulary posttests. The WC group provided a greater amount of partially correct responses than the WI group on the both the first (see graph 5) and second (see graph 7) vocabulary posttests. The words in context group appeared to be better able to provide partially correct responses when they were

unable to provide a correct response at first than the WI group. The WI group was given word meanings and never discussed how they might be used. The WC group, on the other hand, was always discussing word meanings and how the word might be used as they were deriving their definitions. It is possible that discussing word meanings may have helped students at least remember a partial definition when they were unable to remember the full definition. The WI group was at a disadvantage if they could not remember the meaning of the word they had been given and were less likely to provide partial definitions than the WC group. Exposure to the usage of words in context and using context to derive word meaning appeared to assist more students in the learning of word meanings than memorizing definitions.

How can educators most effectively and efficiently increase a child's word knowledge? Although context cue instruction did not appear to have any affect on the participants' natural ability to use context to derive the meaning of unknown words from context, there were some beneficial effects of context cue instruction that should not be overlooked. First of all, the context cue group spent more time discussing the meaning of words and using newly learned vocabulary in their own speech than did the WI group. Context cue instruction also appeared to have a positive affect on student learning of new vocabulary words and retention of those word meanings when the teacher was guiding the usage of context cues to develop the meaning of unknown words in context. It appears that educators can effectively increase a child's word knowledge through context cue instruction.

Implications

Even though there were some inherent limitations to this study, the results from this study should not be overlooked. Unfortunately, the deriving meaning from context instruction did not appear to dramatically affect the student's use of context to derive the meaning of unknown words. Using context cues consistently and effectively appears to be a very difficult task to learn for 4th and 5th grade students. Some students in this study did appear to have a natural ability to use context to a limited extent. Each student's use of context was completely different. Some students from both groups were much more skilled at using context to derive word meanings from context than other students. Some students could determine the meaning of an unknown word quickly when it was presented in context, whereas, other students struggled over determining the meaning of an unknown word from context. It would be interesting to observe whether more exposure to context and reading in context over a longer period of time would improve the usage of context to determine word meanings. Maybe students do not need to learn a strategy for using context to derive word meaning since they appear to have some natural ability to use context on their own. The missing link between the students who can use context effectively and those who do not might be the amount of exposure they have to context in the classroom and in real life or in their ability to read.

Although context instruction did not appear to improve student's use of context to derive word meanings, there were some beneficial aspects of instruction in learning words from context. The students in the WC group learned

more vocabulary words, retained more vocabulary meanings over time and it appeared that the context instruction produced more consistent results than the direct instruction in word meanings. It would be interesting to research whether these results remained the same or showed significant differences when doing the study with a larger sample size.

In addition to the learning gains experienced by the WC group, I also observed a difference in the learning attitudes of the WC group and the WI group. The WC group appeared to be more excited about learning vocabulary words than the WI group. The WI group often came to group time with the attitude of "Why do we have to do this?" and "Memorizing words is boring." whereas the WC group came to group time excited to read and find out more about the story. Learning the meaning of words in context did not take away from the student's enjoyment of reading and may have even added to it.

Another exciting behavior that was observed in the WC group and not observed in the WI group was student usage of previously learned vocabulary words in their discussions of the story or in deriving the meaning of new unknown words in context. During group time I often observed the members of the WC group using the words they had previously learned in their talks about the story they were reading. This same behavior was not observed in the WI group. The behavior of integrating newly learned words into speech and related discussion was not a focus of this study. I observed the behavior and noted it in my field notes. More research in this area is needed before it can be determined whether

the type of vocabulary instruction received has an affect on students' integration of newly learned vocabulary in their own speech.

A second question that stems from this observation is: "Does learning words in context help students develop a fuller understanding of vocabulary words since they display the ability of using the words meaningfully in their own speech?" If the answer to this question is 'yes' then context cue instruction would seem to be a more meaningful and beneficial form of vocabulary instruction than direct instruction in word meaning because the students who receive context cue instruction develop meaningful definitions and use words meaningfully after instruction.

A third question that stems from these observations is how the attitude of the students affects their learning and how the instructional method used affects the learning attitudes of the students. As educators we should provide students with the most beneficial form of vocabulary instruction designed to improve students' ability to read and understand what they are reading on their own. Hopefully, as students' vocabularies and reading comprehension grows so will their enjoyment of reading.

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APPENDIX A

Vocabulary Pretest

Name:_____

Directions: Write a sentence or a word that tells the meaning of each word

1. scheme_____
2. ferocity_____
3. sympathy_____
4. truce_____
5. bedlam_____
6. slaked_____
7. dignity_____
8. sponsor_____
9. dapper_____
10. malamute_____
11. traits_____
12. betrayed_____
13. leaden_____
14. enclosure_____
15. resign_____
16. strewn_____
17. strident_____
18. ravenously_____
19. rouse_____

20. lynx_____

21. ridge_____

22. grotesque_____

23. gauging_____

24. haul_____

25. makeshift_____

26. barren_____

27. cocksure_____

28. ordeal_____

29. diagnosis_____

30. surmise_____

31. bachelor_____

32. cripple_____

33. pallet_____

34. tenacity_____

35. kennel_____

36. stampede_____

37. erect_____

38. recovery_____

39. dormant_____

40. coax_____

41. deftly_____

42. fraud_____

43. impersonal _____

44. excursion _____

45. mallard _____

46. tundra _____

47. mongrel _____

48. pursuit _____

49. quested _____

50. venture _____

51. tragedy _____

52. wharves _____

53. acrid _____

54. gimp _____

55. circuit _____

56. aroma _____

57. grovel _____

58. stealthily _____

59. seething _____

60. interior _____

61. elevation _____

62. aloof _____

63. feint _____

64. jugular _____

65. fatigue _____

66. resent _____

67. geysers _____

68. reassure _____

69. lure _____

70. astray _____

71. crocuses _____

72. crevasse _____

73. glacier _____

74. specter _____

75. emaciated _____

76. defiant _____

77. descend _____

78. plaguing _____

79. deliberation _____

80. traitor _____

APPENDIX B

Letter requesting parental permission

Dear Parents, October 1999

My name is Rebecca VanCott an I am currently substitute teaching in the Coupeville and Oak Harbor School Districts. I am completing a Master's degree in Elementary Education with a concentration in literacy. As a requirement of the program, we are to do research on a specific aspect of literacy. Since I do not have a classroom to conduct research, Ms. Robbins has invited me to interview, teach and collect data on a few of her students. As a part of this project, parental permission is required.

My project will examine methods of vocabulary instruction and how it affects students learning and retention of vocabulary. The results of the project must be submitted to the university in the form of a final paper. The paper will reflect the instructional techniques that were used and the type of word learning that occurred as a result of those instructional techniques.

This project will not interfere with any child's learning. In fact, the vocabulary words that will be taught will come directly form the books which the students are currently reading in their reading groups. The vocabulary instruction will occur simultaneously with reading instruction. My main goal is to research best practices for the classroom. The findings will be used solely for educational purposes.

The findings will be presented to Western Washington University faculty, and there is a possibility that this information may be published for educational purposes. all confidential information will be protected. names and places will be changed and not child will be identified by name.

Even though all information will be kept confidential, I need your permission to include your child in this project. please fell free to contact me with further questions or concerns. Ms. Robbins would also be able to answer questions you may have.

Sincerely,

Rebecca VanCott
(360) 240-8446

Please return the bottom portion of this letter to school with your child

---

Rebecca VanCott,
You have my permission to include my child in your project. I understand that all information collected will be kept confidential and used only for educational purposes.

_____ _____

Parent(s) or Guardian(s) signature(s)

APPENDIX C

Deriving Meaning from Context Pretest

Name:_____

1. The hysterically happy, shouting crowd surged around them. Cameras snapped and whirred, horns blew, people, shouted and laughed. A half-dozen public address speakers blared the time and the winner's name into the **bedlam**.

Meaning of the word

Explanation

2. But he did not die, There was nothing soft or flabby in his makeup. He clung to the slender thread o life with a **tenacity** only a half-wild creature, raised and toughened to the trail by a man such as Charlie One Eye, could have.

Meaning of the word

Explanation

3. The very air he breathed her was different. He missed the clean sweet smell of the tundra, the fresh, biting tang of the open sea. This city air was heavy with **acrid** fumes form a thousand different sources. They irritated his delicate nostrils.

Meaning of the word

Explanation

4. But finally he could go not farther. He crawled into the protection of a patch of brush, and lay down. He was panting and trembling with **fatigue**, and every injury he'd sustained was on fire.

Meaning of the word

Explanation

5. The storm continued to howl over the mountains and down into the valley where the wreckage of the plane was **strewn**. It spread a whit blanket over the tragic scene, and over an iron cage some feet off in which lay the battered, still form of a wolf gray animal.

Meaning of the word

Explanation

6. Andy studied the cold sky, **gauging** the daylight he had left: about another hour. It would be very late when he got home.

Meaning of the word

Explanation

7. He cut holes through the thin aluminum wing and threaded the rope through. he made aloof big enough to slip over his shoulders and across his chest. he pulled this **makeshift** sled to the iron cage.

Meaning of the word

Explanation

8. "Common sense ought to tell him it's no use-and you, too."
"Having Vic Walker look at the dog makes a lot of sense to me. He could make a **diagnosis**."
"On a dog?"
"He is a doctor."
"That's right! A doctor-not a vet," Kurt said half angrily. "He won't come out her to look at a dog. I know Vic Walker."

Meaning of the word

Explanation

9. Several times other lone wolves tried to join them. this they both **resented** and stood side by side, growling and showing their teeth. The lone wolf would always back off and turn his tail.

Meaning of the word

Explanation

10. He rolled back his lips from the big tearing teeth and reached forward cautiously. He lifted the meat from Andy's palm so **deftly** the boy scarcely felt it. Andy patted his head and said, "That's a good boy. That's good."

Meaning of the word

Explanation

Deriving Meaning from Context Pretest

Name:_____

1. The hysterically happy, shouting crowd surged around them. Cameras snapped and whirred, horns blew, people, shouted and laughed. A half-dozen public address speakers blared the time and the winner's name into the **bedlam**.

_____

2. But he did not die, There was nothing soft or flabby in his makeup. He clung to the slender thread o life with a **tenacity** only a half-wild creature, raised and toughened to the trail by a man such as Charlie One Eye, could have.

_____

3. The very air he breathed her was different. He missed the clean sweet smell of the tundra, the fresh, biting tang of the open sea. This city air was heavy with **acrid** fumes form a thousand different sources. They irritated his delicate nostrils.

_____

4. But finally he could go not farther. He crawled into the protection of a patch of brush, and lay down. He was panting and trembling with **fatique**, and every injury he'd sustained was on fire.

_____

5. The storm continued to howl over the mountains and down into the valley where the wreckage of the plane was **strewn**. It spread a whit blanket over the tragic scene, and over an iron cage some feet off in which lay the battered, still form of a wolf gray animal.

_____

6. Andy studied the cold sky, **gauging** the daylight he had left: about another hour. It would be very late when he got home.

_____

7. He cut holes through the thin aluminum wing and threaded the rope through. he made aloof big enough to slip over his shoulders and across his chest. he pulled this **makeshift** sled to the iron cage.

---

8. "Common sense ought to tell him it's no use-and you, too."

"Having Vic Walker look at the dog makes a lot of sense to me. He could make a **diagnosis**."

"On a dog?"

"He is a doctor."

"That's right! A doctor-not a vet," Kurt said half angrily. "He won't come out her to look at a dog. I know Vic Walker."

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9. Several times other lone wolves tried to join them. this they both **resented** and stood side by side, growling and showing their teeth. The lone wolf would always back off and turn his tail.

---

10. He rolled back his lips from the big tearing teeth and reached forward cautiously. He lifted the meat from Andy's palm so **deftly** the boy scarcely felt it. Andy patted his head and said, "That's a good boy. That's good."

APPENDIX D

He lifted the squirming pup by the scruff of the neck, and looked at him. His careless grip pinched the pup's tender skin, and he wriggled and whimpered in protest

APPENDIX E

Steps for figuring out the meaning of a word

1. underline the unknown word

2. discuss and list the clues that might suggest the meaning of the word

3. think about the possible meanings of the word

4. guess the meaning of the word

APPENDIX F

He dropped the pup. His big hand struck, and with a startled yelp of pain and surprise the pup was knocked rolling. He gathered himself and charged back to the attack, growling with puppy ferocity.

APPENDIX G

He saw to it the wolf side of his nature was not neglected. "A lead dog has to be a fighter," he insisted. "Got to lick every one in the team to keep 'em in line." He showed Kavik no **sympathy** or mercy. The dog never heard a kind or encouraging word or felt the touch of a gentle hand.

The leader stood, head up, sharp ears pricked forward, not noticing the noise of the crowd around him. He had the **dignity** of a king, the bearing of a champion. In spite of the many miles he had just run, he looked alert and ready to go at the command of his master.

APPENDIX H

List of words and definitions used during words in isolation instruction

Day One Words:

1. **ferocity:** fierce, angry, cruelty
2. **sympathy:** understanding someone's feelings
3. **truce:** an agreement after arguing
4. **bedlam:** a noisy place of confusion
5. **dignity:** proud confident manner

Day Two Words:

1. **sponsor:** to support someone or something
2. **dapper:** neat and stylish
3. **malamute:** a type of husky dog
4. **traits:** a characteristic of a person or animal
5. **leaden:** dull, gloomy and gray

Day Three Words

1. **enclosure:** a place that is shut in on all sides
2. **resign:** to give up a job position or office
3. **strewn:** to scatter or sprinkle
4. **strident:** hard, loud, sharp sound
5. **ravenously:** very hungry, greedy

Day Four Words

1. **rouse:** to awaken from sleep, to excite
2. **lynx:** a strong wild animal of the cat family with long legs an a short tail
3. **ridge:** a long narrow chain of mountains
4. **grotesque:** strange an ugly in shape and appearance
5. **gauging:** a measurement or estimate
6. **haul:** to pull or rag with force
7. **makeshift:** something used in place of the real thing
8. **barren:** not able to produce much

Day Five Words

1. **cocksure:** very sure, overly self confident
2. **surmise:** to guess
3. **diagnosis:** to examine a person of animal to fin out what is wrong
4. **bachelor:** a man who is not married
5. **ordeal:** a very hard or painful experience
6. **cripple:** a person or animal that can not use some part of their body

Day Six Words

1. **pallet:** small, hard temporary bed
2. **tenacity:** holding firm, stubborn
3. **stampede:** a sudden rush of many animals or people
4. **recovery:** a return to good health
5. **dormant:** sleeping, not active
6. **coax:** to influence by gentle kindness
7. **deftly:** quick an skillful
8. **fraud:** dishonest trick or person

Day Seven Words

1. **excursion:** a short trip
2. **mallard:** a duck
3. **tundra:** a cold treeless plain
4. **mongrel:** a dog of mixed breeds
5. **pursuit:** a chase
6. **venture:** to risk going somewhere
7. **tragedy:** a sad or terrible event

Day Eight Words

1. **wharves:** a dock for loading an unloading ships
2. **acrid:** very better taste or smell
3. **gimp:** a cripple (a slang term)
4. **circuit:** moving around in a circle
5. **aroma:** a good smell
6. **grovel:** humble oneself, cringe
7. **stealthily:** secret or sly manner

Day Nine Words

1. **seething:** very angry or upset
2. **interior:** inside
3. **slaked:** to satisfy with a drink
4. **betrayed:** to be unfaithful

Day Ten Words

1. **scheme:** a plan or plot for doing something
2. **kennel:** a house for a dog
3. **erect:** standing straight up
4. **impersonal:** not showing feelings

Day Eleven Words

1. **quested:** to search or hunt for something
2. **elevation:** raised or high place
3. **aloof:** tending to keep to oneself
4. **feint:** a movement intended to trick, a fake attack
5. **jugular:** large vein in the neck

Day Twelve Words

1. **fatigue:** great tiredness
2. **resented:** to feel angry towards
3. **geysers:** a spring of hot water that rises suddenly into the air
4. **reassure:** to comfort and make someone feel better
5. **lure:** to attract by promising something
6. **astray:** away form the right way

Day Thirteen Words

1. **crocuses:** a small purple, white or yellow flower
2. **crevasse:** a deep open crack
3. **glacier:** a large mass of ice
4. **specter:** a ghost
5. **emaciated:** extremely thin form hunger or illness

Day Fourteen Words

1. **defiant:** not obeying, refusing
2. **descend:** to move or come from a higher place to a lower place
3. **plaguing:** to trouble or annoy
4. **deliberation:** careful thought
5. **traitor:** a person who does harm to his friends or country

Sentence examples used during words in isolation instruction

Day One:

1. The wolves fought with great **ferocity.**
2. We feel **sympathy** for a person who is ill.
3. A **truce** was declared between the two armies.
4. When our team won there was a **bedlam** in the gym.
5. The king maintained his **dignity** during the argument.

Day Two:

1. My dad is a **sponsor** because he bought the teams' uniforms.
2. He looks very **dapper** in that suit.
3. When I take our **malamute** for a walk he always scares the little dogs we meet.
4. Bravery is a necessary **trait** of a fire fighter.
5. Do you think those **leaden** clouds mean snow?

Day Three

1. A corral is an **enclosure** for horses.
2. I **resigned** as team captain.
3. The seeds were **strewn** over the garden.
4. The **strident** wind swirled around the house during the storm.
5. After the walk he became **ravenously** hungry.

Day Four

1. The loud noise **roused** us.
2. The **lynx** lives in parts of the U.S. and Canada.
3. When we went hiking, we walked along the **ridge** of the mountain.
4. There were **grotesque** monsters in the movie.
5. He **gauged** the amount of daylight he had left.
6. We **hauled** the trunk up the stairs.
7. When the blinds broke, we used a sheet as a makeshift curtain.
8. No plant can grow in **barren** soil.

Day Five

1. James became **cocksure** after scoring the first pint in the soccer game.
2. We **surmise** that the traffic jam has been caused by an accident.
3. The doctors used x-rays and blood samples to make their **diagnosis.**
4. Since my uncle is not married, he lives that life of a **bachelor.**
5. Living through the earthquake was an **ordeal.**
6. The dog is a **cripple** because he can not walk.

Day Six

1. The day enjoyed sleeping on his **pallet.**
2. He clung to the rope with great **tenacity.**
3. The thunderstorm frightened the animals and caused a **stampede.**
4. She made a quick **recovery** from the fever.
5. A volcano that had been **dormant** for a year suddenly erupted.
6. The children had to be **coaxed** into going to school.
7. He lifted the meat **deftly** from the boy's hand.
8. The man who sol me the fake diamond was a **fraud.**

Day Seven

1. Our club went on an **excursion** to the mountains.
2. The male **mallard** has a green head and a white band around its neck.
3. The ground beneath the treeless **tundra** was frozen.
4. The dog was a **mongrel** because his mom was a black lab and his dad was a malamute.
5. The police were in **pursuit** of the speeding car.
6. She **ventured** her life to rescue me.
7. Her sudden death was a **tragedy** to her friends.

Day Eight

1. Many ships were tied to the **wharves.**
2. The **acrid** coal smoke made my eyes water.
3. The cripple had a **gimp** leg.
4. The earth made a **circuit** around the sun.
5. The bread we were baking gave off a delicious **aroma.**
6. The dog **groveled** before its master when it saw the whip.
7. The wolf sneaked up **stealthily** towards her prey.

Day Nine

1. My mother was **seething** because I did not clean my room.
2. The **interior** of the cave was dark.
3. We **slaked** our thirst at the spring.
4. You should not **betray** your friends.

Day Ten

1. The crooks had a **scheme** for robbing the bank.
2. We had to leave our dog in a **kennel** when we went on vacation.
3. The dog's ears became **erect** when the owner whistled.
4. The prison guard treated the prisoners in an **impersonal** manner.

Day Eleven

1. The explores went on a **quest for** gold.
2. A hill is an **elevation.**
3. One boy stood **aloof** from all the other boys.
4. The boxer **feinted** with his left hand and then punched with his right.
5. The **jugular** vein is located on both sides of the neck.

Day Twelve

1. I felt extreme **fatigue** after standing for four hours.
2. I **resent** your unkind remark.
3. A **geyser** of water shot up form the ground.
4. Before the curtain rose the director **reassured** the actors.
5. Bees **lured** by the scent of flowers.
6. The cows have gone **astray.**

Day Thirteen

1. We saw a purple **crocus** in the garden.
2. There was a large **crevasse** in the ground after the earthquake.
3. The **glacier** was moving slowly down the mountain.
4. People have claimed to have seen specters on Halloween night.
5. A long illness had **emaciated** the patient.

Day Fourteen

1. She told us in a **defiant** manner that she was against out plans.
2. We **descended** the stairs to get to the basement.
3. Mosquitoes **plagued** the hikers.
4. After long **deliberation** she decided not to go.
5. The **traitors** gave secrets to the enemy.

APPENDIX I

Vocabulary Post-Test

Name:_____

Write a definition

Directions: Write a word or sentence that tells the meaning of the word given. You may not use the word given in your describing sentence.

1. bedlam_____
2. slaked_____
3. dignity_____
4. dapper_____
5. traits_____
6. leaden_____
7. enclosure_____
8. strewn_____
9. strident_____
10. ravenously_____

Pick the Best Definition

Direction: Underline the correct definition.

11. scheme
    a. to be upset with some one
    b. a plan or plot for doing something
    c. to brainstorm ideas for a story
    d. don't know

12. resign
    a. to fall asleep
    b. writing your name
    c. to give up
    d. don't know

13. ferocity
    a. anger or fierceness
    b. loud and noisy
    c. excitement or happiness
    d. don't know

14. fraud
    a. an old man
    b. an unkind word
    c. a trick or a fake
    d. don't know

15. stampede
    a. a rush of many animals
    b. playing of loud music
    c. a parade of marching bands
    d. don't know

16. haul
    a. to drive a car
    b. to pull or drag
    c. to run a far distance
    d. don't know

17. sponsor
    a. to write a book
    b. to support someone
    c. to buy someone's house
    d. don't know

18. lynx
    a. a small rabbit
    b. a female wolf
    c. a wild cat
    d. don't know

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19. sympathy
a. giving a lot of money to someone
b. crying when you have hurt yourself
c. understanding someone's feelings
d. don't know

20. mallard
a. a duck with a green head
b. a dog without a home
c. a cat with a short tail
d. don't know

Write a Definition

21. rouse _____

22. ridges _____

23. gauging _____

24. makeshift _____

25. barren _____

26. cocksure _____

27. ordeal _____

28. diagnosis _____

29. surmise _____

30. cripple _____

Pick the Best Definition

31. impersonal
a. showing no feelings
b. listening carefully
c. ignoring someone
d. don't know

32. kennel
a. a pot for boiling water
b. a square box for plants
c. a house for dogs and cats
d. don't know

33. malamute
a. a small wild duck
b. a big Husky dog
c. a dog that can't bark
d. don't know

34. grotesque
a. to grow large very quickly
b. to look strange an ugly
c. to lack taste and flavor
d. don't know

35. truce
a. to share with someone
b. to purposely trick someone
c. to come to an agreement
d. don't know

36. elevation
a. a raised high place
b. lifting objects up high
c. an increase in your heart rate
d. don't know

37. recovery
a. to cover with a blanket
b. to return to good health
c. to return a stolen object
d. don't know

38. tundra
a. a large plot of farmland
b. a meadow of wild flowers
c. a cold flat land with no trees
d. don't know

39. pursuit
a. a chase
b. a hold up
c. an adventure
d. don't know

40. betrayed
a. to lose a good friend when moving
b. to be unfaithful and switch sides
c. to give a wrong answer on a test
d. don't know

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Write a Definition

41. pallet _____

42. tenacity _____

43. erect _____

44. dormant _____

45. coax _____

46. deftly _____

47. excursion _____

48. mongrel _____

49. wharves _____

50. acrid _____

Pick the Best Definition

51. traitor
a. a person who harms his friends or country
b. a person who enjoys trading cards or toys
c. a person who gives money to the poor
d. don't know

52. aroma
a. a long bath
b. a city in Rome
c. a good smell
d. don't know

53. circuit
a. running a mile long race
b. moving in a circular pattern
c. plugging in electronic equipment
d. don't know

54. quested
a. closing down a store
b. searching for something
c. putting a fence around a yard
d. don't know

55. bachelor
a. a man who is not married
b. a man who wears a tuxedo
c. a man without a home
d. don't know

56. glacier
a. a large piece of beach glass
b. a thin frosting on cakes
c. a large mass of ice
d. don't know

57. interior
a. carpeting
b. inside
c. decorations
d. don't know

58. venture
a. to put money in the bank
b. to take a risk doing something
c. to take a trip to another country
d. don't know

59. tragedy
a. a sad or terrible event
b. a time of peace
c. a story with a good ending
d. don't know

60. lure
a. an evil look given by an enemy
b. fishing net used to catch salmon
c. to attract by promising something
d. don't know

Write a Definition

61. gimp _____

62. seething _____

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63. aloof _____

64. feint _____

65. jugular _____

66. fatigue _____

67. reassure _____

68. geysers _____

69. emaciated _____

70. plaguing _____

71. deliberation _____

Pick the Best Definition

72. grovel
a. to beg or plead
b. to crawl in dirt
c. to collect rocks
d. don't know

73. resented
a. to re-send an e-mail
b. to be angry with someone
c. to give up something
d. don't know

74. astray
a. to run away from home
b. stray from the right way
c. to follow directions
d. don't know

75. stealthily
a. moving quickly
b. sneaky and silent
c. making loud sounds
d. don't know

76. crocuses
a. a chorus of frogs
b. a small river crossing
c. a small springtime flower
d. don't know

77. crevasse
a. a deep open crack
b. a neck tie
c. a flower pot
d. don't know

78. specter
a. an eye lens
b. a spy
c. a ghost
d. don't know

79. defiant
a. to yell loudly and rudely
b. to stand stiff and straight
c. to refuse and disobey
d. don't know

80. descend
a. to take back a gift because you want it
b. to move from a high place to a low place
c. to move to an unfamiliar and new home
d. don't know

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APPENDIX J

Vocabulary posttest #1 - sentence cues for the words in isolation tasks

Words in isolation section #1 (questions #1-10)

1. After our school won the basketball game it was a **bedlam** in the gym.
2. He **slaked** his thirst in the river.
3. He had the **dignity** of a king.
4. He was a dapper man in his tuxedo.
5. There were many good **traits** about him.
6. We could see the **leaden** sky meant a storm was heading our way.
7. He was inside an **enclosure**.
8. The wreckage of the plane was **strewn** about the ground.
9. I heard the **strident** wind against my window.
10. He was **ravenously** hungry.

Words in Isolation section #2 (questions #21-30)

21. He tried to rouse him.
22. We walked along a mountain ridge.
23. He was **gauging** how much sunlight he had left.
24. He made a **makeshift** sled.
25. The top of the mountain was **barren.**
26. This man liked adventure and was very **cocksure.**
27. Because of the accident, he had been through an **ordeal.**
28. The doctor used x-rays and blood samples to make a **diagnosis.**
29. He tried to **surmise** what was wrong.
30. The man with the limp is a **cripple.**

Words in Isolation section #3 (questions #41-50)

41. He slept on a **pallet** in the corner of the room.
42. He held on to life with firm **tenacity.**

43. His ears were **erect.**
44. The volcano was **dormant.**
45. He tried to **coax** the dog to come to him.
46. He lifted the food **deftly** from my hand.
47. Our club went on an **excursion** to the mountains.
48. The dog was a **mongrel.**
49. There are many ships along the **wharves.**
50. The **acrid** smell hurt his nose.

Words in Isolation section #4 (questions #61-71)

61. He had a **gimp** leg.
62. My mother was **seething** because I did not clean my room.
63. The boy stood **aloof** from the other boys.
64. The boxer **feinted** with his left hand and punched with his right.
65. The wolf put his mouth around his neck and bit into his **jugular.**
66. After running the mile we were greatly **fatigued.**
67. He tried to **reassure** her.
68. As he shot the ground there was a **geyser** of snow.
69. He was **emaciated** from not eating.
70. Stop **plaguing** me with your questions.
71. It took great **deliberation** to make the decision.

Vocabulary posttest #2 - sentence cues for the words in isolation tasks

Words in isolation section #1 (questions #1-10)

1. The crooks had a **scheme** for robbing the bank.
2. I **resigned** as team captain after I broke my arm.
3. The wolves fought with great **ferocity.**
4. The man who sold me the fake diamond was a **fraud.**
5. The thunderstorm frightened the animals and caused a **stampede.**
6. We **hauled** the bed up the stairs.
7. My dad is a **sponsor** because he bought the team's uniforms.
8. The **lynx** lives in parts of the U.S. and Canada.
9. We feel **sympathy** for a person who is ill.
10. The male **mallard** has a green head and a white ban around his neck.

Words in isolation section #2 (questions #21-30)

21. The prison guard treated the prisoners in an **impersonal** manner.
22. We had to leave our dog in a **kennel** when we went on vacation.
23. When I take our **malamute** for a walk he always scares the little dogs we meet.
24. There were **grotesque** monsters in the movie.
25. A **truce** was declared between the two armies.
26. A hill is an **elevation.**
27. She made a quick **recovery** from the fever.
28. The ground beneath the treeless **tundra** was frozen.
29. The police were in **pursuit** of the speeding cars.
30. You should not **betray** your friends.

Words in isolation section #3 (questions #41-50)

41. The **traitors** gave secrets to the enemy.

42. The bread we were baking gave off a delicious **aroma.**
43. The earth made a **circuit** around the sun.
44. The explorers went on a **quest** for gold.
45. Since my uncle is not married he lives the life of a **bachelor**.
46. The **glacier** was moving slowly down the mountain.
47. The **interior** of the cave was dark.
48. She **ventured** her life to rescue me.
49. Her sudden death was a **tragedy** to her friends.
50. Bees are **lured** by the sent of flowers.

Words in isolation section #4 (questions #61-69)

61. The dog **groveled** before its master when it saw the whip.
62. I **resent** your unkind remark.
63. The cows have left the field and gone **astray.**
64. The wolf sneaked up **stealthily** toward her pray.
65. We saw a purple **crocus** in the garden.
66. There was a large **crevasse** in the ground after the earthquake.
67. People have claimed to see **specters** on Halloween night.
68. She told us in a **defiant** manner she was against our plans.
69. We **descended** the stairs to get to the basement.

APPENDIX K

Vocabulary Post-Test #2

Name:_____

Write a definition

Directions: Write a word or sentence that tells the meaning of the word given. You may not use the word given in your describing sentence.

1. scheme_____
2. resign_____
3. ferocity_____
4. fraud_____
5. stampede_____
6. haul_____
7. sponsor_____
8. lynx_____
9. sympathy_____
10. mallard_____

Pick the Best Definition

Direction: Underline the correct definition.

11. bedlam
    a. a blanket made of lamb's wool
    b. a noisy place of confusion
    c. a place where travelers spend the night
    d. don't know

12. slaked
    a. to run a race slowly
    b. to eat without stopping
    c. to quench your thirst
    d. don't know

13. dignity
    a. to be happy and excited
    b. to be greedy and mean
    c. to be proud and confident
    d. don't know

14. dapper
    a. to be neat and stylish
    b. an unkind word
    c. a trick or a fake
    d. don't know

15. traits
    a. a person's feelings
    b. describes a person or animal
    c. things that people own
    d. don't know

16. leaden
    a. dark gloomy and gray
    b. bright shiny and new
    c. weighing over a ton
    d. don't know

17. enclosure
    a. a small plot of land surrounded by flowers
    b. a long narrow fence with a small opening
    c. a place that is closed in on all sides
    d. don't know

18. strewn
    a. to decorate neatly
    b. to scatter or sprinkle
    c. to put things in order
    d. don't know

19. strident
a. strong loud violent sound
b. nice smelling cleaning detergent
c. long quick step taken while walking
d. don't know

20. ravenously
a. very hungry
b. very noisy
c. very quickly
d. don't know

Write a Definition

21. impersonal _____

22. kennel _____

23. malamute _____

24. grotesque _____

25. truce _____

26. elevation _____

27. recovery _____

28. tundra _____

29. pursuit _____

30. betrayed _____

Pick the Best Definition

31. rouse
a. to pick up and carry
b. to jump up in the air
c. to move or wake up
d. don't know

32. ridge
a. a raised up high place
b. a deep open crack
c. a long narrow edge
d. don't know

33. gauging
a. to watch something for a while
b. to measure or estimate
c. to make gauges for cars
d. don't know

34. makeshift
a. a job with long night hours
b. a sled used for hauling cargo
c. made to replace the real thing
d. don't know

35. barren
a. can't produce anything
b. a very wealthy man
c. a fighter pilot
d. don't know

36. cocksure
a. to take risk and be sure of yourself
b. to be sneaky and trick many people
c. to cheat when taking a hard test
d. don't know

37. ordeal
a. an agreement made after an argument
b. a hard, tough time or painful experience
c. a bad trade or deal has been made
d. don't know

38. surmise
a. to destroy
b. to retell
c. to guess
d. don't know

39. diagnosis
a. to check out to find out what is wrong
b. to return a person to good health
c. to solve a very difficult murder mystery
d. don't know

40. cripple
a. can't use some part of the body
b. a stream that turns into a creek
c. a person who lost all their money
d. don't know

Write a Definition

41. traitor _____

42. aroma _____

43. circuit _____

44. quested _____

45. bachelor _____

46. glacier _____

47. interior _____

48. venture _____

49. tragedy _____

50. lure _____

Pick the Best Definition

51. pallet
a. a painting in a museum
b. a small hard temporary bed
c. a place to keep animals
d. don't know

52. tenacity
a. stubborn
b. stealthily
c. silent
d. don't know

53. erect
a. to decorate a tree
b. to carry up stairs
c. to stand straight up
d. don't know

54. dormant
a. standing still
b. temporary housing
c. not active
d. don't know

55. coax
a. lure someone into a trap
b. encourage with kindness
c. making fun of someone
d. don't know

56. deftly
a. gentle, careful and skillful
b. quick, sneaky and silent
c. loud, strong and slow
d. don't know

57. excursion
a. a short trip
b. a doctor's visit
c. a plane flight
d. don't know

58. mongrel
a. a mean, unkind person
b. a person without a home
c. a dog of mixed breeds
d. don't know

59. wharves
a. small make believe man
b. fishing dock for boats
c. log cabins by the water
d. don't know

60. acrid
a. a bad irritating bitter smell or taste
b. a wild an very dangerous animal
c. a large fenced in yard with trees
d. don't know

Write a Definition

61. grovel _____

62. resented _____

63. astray _____

64. stealthily _____

65. crocuses _____

66. crevasse _____

67. specter _____

68. defiant _____

69. descend _____

Pick the Best Definition

70. gimp
a. a slang term for cripple
b. a type of fish eaten by sled dogs
c. a bird that lives in Alaska
d. don't know

71. seething
a. to breathe deeply
b. to boil over
c. to be angry or upset
d. don't know

72. aloof
a. unknown or unfamiliar
b. doesn't care, keeps to oneself
c. standing stiff and straight
d. don't know

73. feint
a. fall over suddenly
b. a river crossing
c. a fake attack
d. don't know

74. jugular
a. a large vein in the neck
b. a very thirsty person
c. a clown at a circus
d. don't know

75. fatigue
a. very big
b. very tired
c. very excited
d. don't know

76. reassure
a. to share secrets with a friend
b. to talk about yourself a lot
c. to make someone feel better
d. don't know

77. geysers
a. to cause a rock to crack
b. to shoot up into the air
c. to melt and form a river
d. don't know

78. emaciated
a. extremely thin from hunger or illness
b. to be made free from slavery
c. to lose your courage after an ordeal
d. don't know

79. plaguing
a. to bother or annoy
b. to tease someone
c. to fix a leak
d. don't know

80. deliberation
a. quickly made decision
b. thoughtless, unkind act
c. long, careful thought
d. don't know

APPENDIX L

Using sentence clues to determine the meaning of words
Post-test

Name: _____

Directions: Write the meaning of the underlined word and explain how you determined the definition of the underlined word.

1. Matilda hated going to the dentist but this visit was a necessity because she had a horrible toothache and the tooth need to come out. After the dentist carefully extracted the tooth from Matilda's mouth he placed the tooth on the counter for Matilda to see. Matilda was horrified by the amount of damage one cavity could do to a tooth.

Definition: _____

Explanation: _____
_____
_____
_____

2. The Reverend Martin Luther King, Jr. was a gifted orator. His speeches on civil rights moved many people to take a stand against racism and prejudice.

Definition: _____

Explanation: _____
_____
_____
_____

3. The accident caused irreparable damage to the car. The ruined engine could not be fixed and the loss of the steering wheel and tires made the car impossible to drive.

Definition: _____

Explanation: _____
_____
_____
_____

4. Tina's classmates made fun of her for never smiling. This made Tina sad because she liked to smile but since she received her new braces she had been unable to smile. Tina's braces inhibited her from smiling.

Definition: _____

Explanation: _____

_____

_____

_____

5. The police chief was not impressed by the Mayor's banal speech about how crime does not pay. In fact, much of the audience had fallen asleep during the Mayor's speech and the other half of the audience was not paying attention.

Definition: _____

Explanation: _____

_____

_____

_____

6. The praying mantis is a strange insect. Some people say it looks grotesque and weird. Others describe it as a terrifying miscreant. If a praying mantis is very hungry it may eat other insects, another praying mantis or even itself. This habit of eating everything is another reason why some people call them monsters.

Definition: _____

Explanation: _____

_____

_____

_____

7. In an attempt to observe athletes of various countries, Pierre de Coubertin conveyed all over the world. He noticed athletes were alike no matter what country they were from.

Definition: _____

Explanation: _____

_____

_____

_____

8. Sam was a wild and independent cat. He could be seen on any night, carousing until all hours, eating catnip and singing loudly with his tomcat friends.

Definition: _____

Explanation: _____
_____
_____
_____

9. I knew she was trouble from the minute I laid eyes on her. She was trying to act calm and nonchalant, just smacking her bubble gum and strolling along the playground as though she didn't give a hoot about anything in the world.

Definition: _____

Explanation: _____
_____
_____
_____

10. What you smell are gym socks. Dirty gym socks that have been worn for an entire year without a wash and left in a locker. Bugs hate the smell. But it goes beyond a simple aversion to the smell of gym socks. They detest the smell so much they can't bare to come near it.

Definition: _____

Explanation: _____
_____
_____
_____